Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-138 *17 July 1996*

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Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 9 Jul

NC1607185796

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 9 July edition of the Cairo Arabic-language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Writer Calls For Improving Preachers' Status
2. Report Claims U.S. Seeks To Pardon Serb War Lords
3. Al-Azhar Islamic Research Center Discusses Jerusalem
4. Writer Claims Israel Opposed to Islamic Reconciliation

WRITER CALLS FOR IMPROVING PREACHERS' STATUS

'AQIDATI's Board Chairman Samir Rajab, in his 500-word weekly column "Truthfully I say" on page 1, discusses the role of preachers in Egypt's mosques. He names several noted scholars who proved their merit and deep learning over the years. He highlights their role in standing against the advocates of terrorism and extremism and in enlightening the masses about the tolerant teachings of Islam. He urges the Awqaf Ministry to improve their material and moral standing, so that they can continue their role in bringing up new generations capable of assuming responsibility.

REPORT CLAIMS U.S. SEEKS TO PARDON SERB WAR LORDS

A 120-word unattributed report headlined "A deal to Pardon the Bosnian Serb Criminals" on page 1 says more and more mass graves of Bosnian Muslims are being discovered in Bosnia. This confirms the heinous crimes that the Bosnian Serbs committed against Muslims until the last moments of the war. Despite these crimes, the international community and NATO forces have failed to arrest Serb "executioner" Radovan Karadzic and Serb gang leader Ratko Mladic. The reports says speculations are increasing that a deal is being arranged between the United States and its partners and the Serbs to exempt them from standing trial before a war crimes tribunal.

AL-AZHAR ISLAMIC RESEARCH CENTER DISCUSSES JERUSALEM ISSUE

An 80-word unattributed report on page 2 says that after a four- year hiatus, the Islamic Research Center at al-Azhar will resume its general congresses this year. In an exclusive statement to 'AQIDATI, al-Azhar Mosque rector shaykh Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi said that Jerusalem will be the primary issue at this year's congress.

WRITER CLAIMS ISRAEL OPPOSED TO ISLAMIC RECONCILIATION

In a 550-word boxed column headlined "Israel Will Not Keep Silent About Islamic Reconciliation" on page 10, Majdi Salim says that signs are looming on the horizon that the rift among the major Islamic countries will be healed. He argues that after President Mubarak's efforts to heal the rift among the Arab countries succeeded, efforts turned to resolving differences among the Arabs and Muslims. He says that these efforts began as Erbakan assumed power in Turkey. He says that Erbakan's policy is clear, but he needs time to assert it. He notes that Syria is playing a role that promises big hopes in bringing "all Arab and Islamic countries together against Israeli designs and U.S. pressure." The United States and Israel, he claims, will not keep silent and efforts will be made to foil the steps aimed at bringing about Islamic reconciliation. He notes in this respect the Western campaign accusing Iran and Syria of masterminding the latest bombing incident in al-Khubar in Saudi Arabia, and reminding the people of their role in supporting terrorist groups. He says that the Egyptian political leadership realizes this and stresses that candor is an essential part of the reconciliation process. He asserts that Israel and its allies do not want Muslims to be united because their unity would shatter Israel's dreams.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: PA Submits List of 23 Israeli 'Violations'

TA1607173496 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 15 Jul 96 pp 1, 7

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, QUDS PRESS — Hasan 'Asfur, director general of the Palestinian Negotiations Department, confirmed that the Palestinian Authority [PA] has submitted a list to the Israeli side containing Israeli violations of the agreements signed between the two sides. He explained that the PA will circulate the list to international and legal organizations as well as to all UN member states.

This list includes 23 Israeli violations of the agreement. They are:

1. Prejudicing the final status: The Israeli Government has acted in contrary to what the agreements stipulated in terms of not prejudicing the results of the final status negotiations. The memorandum mentioned, as

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an example, the Israeli measures aimed at imposing a fait accompli in Jerusalem, fragmenting the geographic unity of Palestinian towns and villages, expansion of settlements, and land confiscation.

2. Suspending the safe passage agreement.

3. Violating the agreement's stipulations on economic relations and obstructing Palestinian imports and exports.

4. Obstructing movement on the Gaza coast and along the road extending from the Netzarim junction to the seashore, in addition to hindering the Palestinian police from fulfilling their tasks.

5. Delaying the transfer of civilian powers and responsibilities in Hebron because of the postponement of the military redeployment.

6. Violating what has been agreed on regarding the al-Muwasi coast in that the Israeli army imposed a naval blockade on the Gaza coasts and prevented fishermen from pursuing their profession.

7. Violating the agreement on Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem in that a cement wall was built, a settlement road was constructed, and walls were erected for the construction of a parking lot near the tomb.

8. Failing to release prisoners according to what was agreed upon between the two sides.

9. Violations in the sphere of environment, such as uprooting hundreds of trees and allowing settlement sewage to flow through the Palestinian territories, thus causing dangerous environmental disasters.

10. Violations related to tourism and antiquities.

11. Violating what has been agreed on regarding postal service in that the delivery of Palestinian mail to Egypt, Jordan, as well as international mail, is still being impeded.

12. Planning and construction: Israel has violated what was agreed upon by escalating the policy of demolishing houses.

13. Violations against sick people and opening fire on citizens.

14. Violation of the agreement regarding the movement of personalities and officials from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank and vice versa.

15. Education: Israel has violated the agreement by closing universities, raiding other universities, and depriving the sons of Gaza from studying at West Bank universities.

16. Suspending the subcommittees' work and failing to hand over civilian powers.

17. Failing to dissolve the Israeli Civil Administration in accordance with the agreement's stipulations.

18. Failing to hand over the electricity authority to the PA in accordance with the agreement's stipulation.

19. Refusing to hand over the al-Fari'ah experimental agricultural station to the PA.

20. The Israeli side's insistence on dealing directly with Palestinian citizens. This is considered a violation of the agreement.

21. Insistence on holding a magnetic ID card as a condition for the Palestinians entering into Israel.

22. Continuing the siege on the PA areas.

23. The ineffectiveness of the mechanism of cooperation and coordination between the two sides because of the intransigent Israeli positions.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Urayqat Cites 47 Israeli 'Violations' of Agreements

JN1607204496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Local Government Minister Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat said that Israeli settlement activity is parallel to terrorism, and that the presence of settlements in Palestinian territories is illegal and against international law.

'Urayqat pointed out that the Israeli policy of imposing a fait accompli and stealing the lands will bury the peace process.

In an exclusive statement to the PALESTINIAN NEWS AGENCY, WAFA, 'Urayqat defined 47 Israeli violations of the Palestinian-Israeli agreements regarding the timetable to resume the final-solution negotiations, the safe corridor between the West Bank and Gaza, the failure to redeploy the troops in Hebron, the failure to dissolve the Civil Administration, violations of the protocol on civil affairs, continued use of the term Judaea and Samaria, and the movement of the Palestinian National Security forces in Area B which should have taken place three months after starting the implementation of the agreement.

'Urayqat added that the Taba agreement stipulates that the Palestinian National Authority's jurisdiction should include the whole West Bank and the Gaza Strip, except for the final-phase issues. Thus, internal security in Area B and all matters in Area C would be transferred, at the same time, to the National Authority,

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just like other Palestinian areas, within 18 months and in three phases and immediately after establishing the Legislative Council. 'Urayqat said: This, however, has not taken place.

Palestinian Affairs: Quray' Says People Cannot Fulfill 'Commitments' to Accords

JN1707061996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 17 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ahmad Quray', speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council has said that the Palestinian people cannot digest the demand that they should fulfill their commitments to agreements signed with Israel while the Israeli side is violating these agreements and continuing the settlement activity which threatens the peace process and which is rejected by the world.

In a statement to the Voice of Palestine, Quray' said the PLO agreed to the short-term agreements based on a timetable, stressing the need for resuming the final status negotiations and implementing all issues related to the interim phase.

Palestinian Affairs: Israel To Ease Closure on Territories

JN1607174696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1600 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An Israeli spokesman announced that Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's government decided today to ease the closure imposed on the Palestinian territories.

The spokesman said that Netanyahu, Foreign Minister David Levi, and Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay had decided to ease the closure on the territories. However, no concrete measures have been announced yet. An Israeli cabinet spokesman said the issue deals with a political decision and that the details will be announced later.

Palestinian Affairs: Sha'th Says Siege 'Main Obstacle' Facing Economy

JN1607204096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation, emphasized today that the Israeli military siege imposed on the Palestinian people is the main obstacle facing the Palestinian economy, and it is impossible to solve the other problems without ending this siege.

At the end of the meeting of the higher coordination committee of the donor states at the office of the special coordinator of UN activities in Gaza, Sha'th added that the donors agreed it is their responsibility, until the end of the siege, to intensify their efforts to provide funds to pay the workers who are employed by the Palestinian Authority until the economy returns to its previous course.

Sha'th said a specific timetable was set, which begins now, for separate meetings with donor states, in addition to the donor states meeting in Washington next month at the level of under secretaries, the Paris meeting on long-term projects next October, and a ministerial meeting for all donor states next December.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat 'Met With' Prominent Brotherhood Leader in Cairo

MM1607124596 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 16 Jul 96 p 5

[Report by Muhammad Salah: "'Arafat Met With al-Banna in Cairo"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo — AL-HAYAH has learned that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat met Sunday [14 July] night with a prominent leading member of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood group in Egypt, Sayf-al-Islam Hasan al-Banna, secretary general of the Egyptian Lawyers' Union and son of the group's founder, Hasan al-Banna.

Informed sources said the meeting was held late at night in al-Andalus Palace and that it lasted about three hours, pointing out that al-Banna had met before with a number of Palestinian officials, among them Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu-Mazin), secretary of the PLO Executive Committee; Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, information minister in the Palestinian Authority; and al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the Palestinian Authority Presidency. The sources pointed out that 'Arafat briefed al-Banna on developments on the international and Palestinian stages, assuring him that the Palestinian Authority is not taking any measures against any Palestinian factions.

Muslim Brotherhood sources say the meeting was a normal one, pointing out that the relationship between 'Arafat and the "Brothers" is an old one, that he had visited them before at their headquarters, and that he had also met with al-Banna more than once in Cairo before.

The sources stressed that the Brothers' position on the Palestinian issue "is fixed and has not changed," and that they are keen to assure themselves about the conditions of all Palestinians through real and authoritative sources away from press reports.

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Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Receives Support Message From France's Chirac

JN1607141096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat received a message from French President Jacques Chirac today at a meeting with French Consul Genera' [Sanasilus Yula Yulay].

Chirac affirmed France's support for the peace process and the legitimate Palestinian rights and stressed the need for all parties to be committed to agreements signed by the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

President 'Arafat received a similar message from U.S. President Bill Clinton yesterday, in which President Clinton stressed his country's support for the peace process and the Palestinian rights.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Confers With European Parliament Delegation

JN1607203896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 16 Jul 96

[Report by Khalil Abu-'Arab in Nabulus]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat received a delegation representing the European Parliament at his residence in the Nabulus Governorate this evening. The delegation is on a visit to Palestinian territories to acquaint itself with the political situation in the region.

The attendees discussed the possibility of extending aid by the European Parliament to the institutions of the Palestinian Legislative Council [PLC] as well as the preparation of a detailed report on the PLC and its submission to the European Parliament for discussion in its coming session. The European delegation invited PLC Speaker Ahmad Quray' and a PLC delegation to attend their coming sessions.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Leader Warns of 'Upsurge of Violence' In Gaza

NC1607212996 Paris AFP in English 2135 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza City, July 16 (AFP) — A senior Hamas leader warned the Palestinian Authority Tuesday [16 July] of an upsurge of violence in the Gaza Strip if the authority continues to refuse dialogue with the Islamic fundamentalist movement.

"The Gaza Strip has a great capacity to soak up pressure, it proved that during the Israeli occupation, but it could explode in an uncontrollable way as it did during the intifadah (uprising)," Mahmud Zohar told AFP.

"The strongest feature of the Palestinian people is the unity within their ranks and this unity has been seriously compromised by the arrests" of militants of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), he said.

He said "all the attempts by Hamas to engage in dialogue" with the Palestinian Authority "to reach an agreement on the most basic of issues have been in vain."

Zohar said the arrival in power of rightwing Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu meant it was "necessary to restore the unity of the Palestinian people at a moment when the failure of the negotiations (with Israel) is becoming probable."

Hamas, which opposed the signing of autonomy accords with Israel, has been the target of a huge crackdown by the Palestinian authorities.

Hundreds of Hamas activists have been imprisoned since a wave of suicide bombings in Israel in late February and early March which left 58 dead. Hamas claimed three of the attacks.

Palestinian Affairs: PFLP Deputy Chief Expected in Autonomy 19 Jul

TA1707080796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 17 Jul 96

[Report by Yoni Ben-Menahem]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Abu-'Ali Mustafa, George Habash's deputy, has departed Damascus and arrived in Amman where he is making the last preparations before entering the autonomy. On 19 July he will cross Allenby Bridge into Jericho, and then make the short trip to the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli defense establishment has approved the entry of Abu-'Ali Mustafa, who is also a Palestine National Council member. The approval was given by the political echelons of the previous government. PFLP [Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine] sources say the purpose of his visit is to find out whether the return to the territories of the entire PFLP leadership, headed by George Habash, is possible. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: EIB To Grant $1 Billion Loan for Gaza Water, Sewage System

TA1707091296 (Internet) GLOBES in English 16 Jul 96

[Report by Ora Qoren]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The European Investment Bank (EIB) will grant a ECU 30 million, or $1

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billion, loan to the Palestinian Authority [PA] for improvement of Gaza's water and sewer system. The financial agreements were signed in Luxembourg by PA Minister of Finance Zuhdi al-Nashashibi, and EIB VP Arianne Oblonsky.

The loan will be given for a 20 year period, and is intended for use by the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), which is in charge of determining the PA's water policy in Gaza and the West Bank. The sum will be subsidized at 3% interest, to be supplied from the European Union budget, and will be considered a high priority investment.

Palestinian Affairs: Netanyahu Cairo Visit Last Chance To Save Peace Process

TA1607171196 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 15 Jul 96 p 13

[Editorial: "A Last Chance To Save the Peace Process"]

[FBIS Translated Text] While Presidents Yasir 'Arafat and Husni Mubarak were deliberating yesterday on ways to support the peace process and overcome the obstacles and positions threatening this process, a new settlement plan aimed at doubling the number of settlers in the Palestinian territories within three years was announced in Israel. It was also announced that the Israeli Government has drawn up proposals, attached to a series of conditions and demands, which it intends to present to the Palestinian National Authority for the gradual resumption of the negotiations.

This development by itself may suffice to increase the Palestinian fears expressed yesterday by President 'Arafat when he stressed that the peace process is facing real danger. Those fears surfaced with the Likud's coming to power and with the series of noes put forward by the new Israeli Government led by Binyamin Netanyahu. Then, the noes were clearly affirmed during the Israeli prime minister's visit to the United States, which was accompanied by practices and measures that have no relation to the peace process.

Evidently, yesterday's talks between presidents 'Arafat and Mubarak derive special significance because Netanyahu is expected to arrive in Cairo on Thursday [18 July] to hold talks dealing mainly with the peace process. Furthermore, it has become necessary to convey directly to Netanyahu a unified Arab stance affirming that the continuation of the peace process depends on the Israeli Government's adherence to the foundations and principles upon which the Madrid Conference was convened and on this government's commitment to the signed agreements. Encroachment upon and the continued violation of those agreements will mean the complete collapse of the peace process.

It is obvious that Egypt, which since the Madrid Conference has played a central role in laying down the foundations and principles of the peace process and in advancing the negotiating process, can relay the clear Arab message — in whose formulation it also played a major role at the recent Arab summit in Cairo. The message affirms all the Arabs' commitment to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace and their refusal to accept Israeli terms and hardline positions that divert the peace process from realizing its goals.

Hence, if Netanyahu used his U.S. visit to manifest the maximum intransigence regarding the main issues in the peace talks, his Cairo visit will be totally different because, perhaps, it will be the last chance for presenting realistic positions, especially as whatever positions are raised will to a large extent determine — whether positively or negatively — the future of the peace process.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: Jordan's al-Kabariti Due in Israel 'This Evening'

TA1607172496 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 16 Jul 96

[Talk in the studio between political correspondent Dan Scemama and anchorman Hayim Yavin —live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Yavin] We start our program with the news that Jordanian Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti is due in Israel this evening for a meeting initiated by the Israeli prime minister. Dan, what is the urgency? What happened?

[Scemama] The visit was initiated by the Jordanian prime minister, not by the Israeli one. Al-Kabariti was in Cairo today; there is talk all over the Arab world about Netanyahu's statements and the Israeli Government policy. He is coming here in order to be briefed before Netanyahu leaves for Cairo. After all, Israel has excellent relations with Jordan.

Preparations for the visit began this morning. It was initially planned to keep it secret, but now it will not be secret. It will be held at the Qirya government compound in Tel Aviv at 2130 [1830 GMT] this evening, in the open, in front of the television cameras. Jordan keeps saying it has extraordinary relations with the Israeli Government, the State of Israel, and with Binyamin Netanyahu.

[Yavin] Everything is being done in anticipation of Netanyahu's visit in Cairo on Thursday [18 July].

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[Scemama] There is more. Although this is being denied by the Prime Minister's Office, perhaps the decision to ease the closure, and the possible meeting with 'Arafat — Dore Gold, the prime minister's adviser, may yet meet tonight with senior PLO elements; perhaps not with 'Arafat, but with very senior elements — all these developments may be viewed in the context of the trip to Cairo.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Jordan's al-Kabariti Arrives in Israel 16 Jul

JN1607192296 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 1900 GMT 16 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report; from the "News at Ten"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti arrived in Israel tonight for talks with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

Al-Kabariti's visit comes ahead of the Israeli prime minister's trip to both Cairo and Amman in the next few days. It also comes as Jordan plays a leading role in bridging different points of view in order to put the peace process back on track according to the principles upon which it was launched.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Amman Radio Reports on al-Kabariti-Netanyahu Meeting

JN1707093996 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0400 GMT 17 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-a'-Karim al-Kabariti and Israeli Prime Minister Binaymin Netanyahu held a meeting at the Israeli Defense Ministry premises in Tel Aviv last night. The meeting dealt with the peace process and the way to resume it in a bid to realize a comprehensive peace in the region.

Al-Kabariti said the meeting was fruitful. AGENCE FRANCE PRESS cited al-Kabariti as saying that Jordan is deeply concerned about the peace process. He pointed out that the Israeli prime minister said he is committed to the pledges Israel made within the framework of the signed agreements.

The Israeli prime minister praised Jordan's role in bringing the viewpoints of the parties concerned closer and in expanding the area of peace in the region. He said his government will expand dialogue with the Palestinian Authority, including Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat. He added that his political adviser Dore Gold will visit Cairo today to prepare for his visit tomorrow.

Al-Kabariti's visit to Israel precedes two visits the Israeli prime minister will pay to Cairo and Amman. Jordan attaches great importance to the two visits and to Jordan's role in bringing viewpoints closer in order to put the peace process back on the right track in accordance with the principles on which it was based.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Jordan's al-Kabariti—Netanyahu Peace Pledge 'Fair Enough'

TA1707090196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 17 Jul 96

[Report by Yuval Yo'az]

[FBIS Translated Text] A symbolic meeting — that is one possible description of the meeting between Prime Ministers Netanyahu and al-Kabariti held at the prime minister's Tel Aviv bureau last night. The Jordanian prime minister brought no specific message — at least not an overt one — but the reason for the meeting and its content can be divined from the urgency with which it was set up following al-Kabariti's meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' yesterday afternoon. After the meeting last night, al-Kabariti said Netanyahu promised to honor the Oslo and Cairo accords, a pledge that satisfies Jordan for now.

[Begin al-Kabariti recording, in English] Prime Minister Netanyahu assured me that they will respect the Oslo agreement, and that the Israeli Government is sincere and willing to fulfill the agreements that were signed, and I think that this is fair enough for the time being. [end recording]

Al-Kabariti revealed that in his meeting with Faruq al-Shar' in Cairo yesterday morning, both he and his interlocutor voiced their shared concern about the future of the peace process. His Tel Aviv trip was made in the wake of his talks in Cairo.

As for Netanyahu, he chose to highlight Egypt and the fact that Husni Mubarak is the leader of the Arab world, one who has expanded the circle of peace.

Referring to the Palestinian track, Netanyahu said Israel would soon expand its ties to the Palestinian Authority and with its chairman — possibly implying that a meeting between him and 'Arafat can be expected to take place soon.

[Begin Netanyahu recording, in English] We are going to broaden and expand our contacts with the Palestinian Authority, and with Chairman 'Arafat as well, and I know that your patience is trying you, but believe me, it's worth waiting for. [end recording]

This morning Netanyahu will send his political adviser Dore Gold to Cairo to coordinate and prepare his brief visit. Netanyahu will spend only five hours in Egypt,

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where he will meet with the man to whom he referred as the Arab world leader — Husni Mubarak.

[Arab affairs correspondent Arye Gus' report on the same newsreel cites "Jordanian sources" as saying that "al-Kabariti's visit to Tel Aviv was due to Jordan's special standing as a bridge between the sides on peace process matters. The Jordanian sources added that their country was seeking to put the peace process back on the right track in accordance with its basic principles — most notably the international resolutions, the UN Security Council resolutions, and the principle of territories for peace."]

Arab-Israeli Talks: PLO's 'Abbas Meets With Netanyahu's Adviser Gold

JN1707055496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 17 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mahmud 'Abbas, [also known as] Abu-Mazin, secretary of the PLO Executive Committee, yesterday met with Dore Gold, adviser to the Israeli prime minister. Talks dealt with issues related to the peace process and ways of overcoming Israeli obstacles in implementing agreements.

Arab-Israeli Talks: 'Very Strained' Atmosphere Reported at Gold-'Abbas Meeting

TA1707070296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 17 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Here is our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem's report on the meeting between Dr. Dore Gold, the prime minister's political adviser, and 'Arafat's deputy Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] last night.

[Ben-Menahem] The meeting, which lasted only 35 minutes, was held at the American Colony Hotel in East Jerusalem. On the Palestinian side, there were Abu-Mazin, Hasan 'Asfur, and Muhammad Dahlan, head of the Palestinian Security Services. The atmosphere was very strained at that meeting. No issues pertaining to the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, such as the Hebron evacuation or the safe passage, were raised. The meeting dealt only with the nature of the relations between the Palestinian Authority and Israel. The Palestinians were very disappointed with the meeting and with the fact that Binyamin Netanyahu is still unwilling to meet with Yasir 'Arafat.

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Egypt

Egypt: Syria's al-Shar' on Meetings With Mubarak, Jordan's al-Kabariti

NC1607133296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1155 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 16 Jul (MENA)—After meeting President Husni Mubarak and Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, Jordanian prime minister and foreign minister, at the Presidential Palace, Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' said he conveyed a message from President Hafiz al-Asad to his brother President Mubarak on developments in the region and the peace process. He noted that this message is within the framework of continuing consultation and coordination between the two presidents and fraternal countries.

Al-Shar' said he held talks with President Mubarak to follow up on the results of the recent Arab summit in Cairo, particularly the unified Arab stand, the peace process, and emphasizing the foundations of the peace process, which is based on international legitimacy, the Security Council resolutions, and the land-for-peace principle. Al-Shar' said the second point we want to emphasize is that the Arab stand we sensed at the recent meeting of the eight member countries of the Damascus Declaration in Muscat is firm and will remain so because it stems from the principle of achieving a comprehensive and fair peace. He stressed that any attempt to violate or change the foundations of the peace process will not succeed.

Discussing his meeting with Jordanian Prime Minister al-Kabariti and whether he sensed a positive response to Syria's stand in light of the Israeli prime minister's visit to "Jordan soon," al-Shar' said: There are constants in the Syrian stand and we express them everywhere—in the information media and at bilateral meetings. This stand stems from the resolutions of international legitimacy, the principle of land for peace, and adherence to complete withdrawal from the occupied Arab territory, that is, complete withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June borders, from south Lebanon, and from other Arab territories.

Asked about the possibility of holding a Syrian-Jordanian summit in Damascus soon, al-Shar' said the Jordanian prime minister spoke of a visit to Syria by King Husayn and meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad. I told him we welcome his visit.

On what Egypt and Jordan want to tell Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu during his visits to these countries, al-Shar' said: We agreed at the recent Arab summit in Cairo on the principles, foundations, resolutions, and the land-for-peace formula. He noted that these issues constitute the foundations on which peace can be built. He said we have agreed on the principle of land for peace and will not deviate from it. He noted that President Mubarak will reassert this principle during Netanyahu's visit and we will continue to insist that the establishment of a fair and comprehensive peace is based on the land-for-peace formula.

Asked about the date of the meeting between President al-Asad and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, al-Shar' said there is no problem over the meeting but no date has yet been set.

Asked whether Syria has information that Israel intends to withdraw from south Lebanon and what Syria's stand would be on such a step, al-Shar' said that Syria welcomes implementation of Security Council Resolution 425, which calls for complete withdrawal from south Lebanon without conditions.

Asked about attempts to separate the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in the negotiations, al-Shar' said that such attempts will not succeed and that this was proved recently and will be again. He said that if there is an Israeli intention to withdraw completely from south Lebanon without condition and without any arrangements or negotiations, Syria will welcome this because it will not consider such a development to be a separate solution. If this step is negotiated, in this case it would be considered a separate solution and an attempt to separate the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

Asked about his meeting with Jordanian Prime Minister al- Kabariti, al-Shar' said the talks dealt with bilateral relations, King Husayn's visit to Damascus, its date, and the Jordanian and Syrian stands on the peace process. He said it was stressed that Syria's position was expressed at the recent Arab summit in Cairo and in the final communique released by the countries of the Damascus Declaration, the meetings of which were concluded in Muscat two days ago.

Regarding Netanyahu's desire to meet Syrian President al-Asad and whether al-Asad will agree to this, al-Shar' said the peace talks have not been resumed between the two countries and it is not possible to speak of a meeting at this level now.

Egypt: Jordan's al-Kabariti Views Meeting With Syria's al-Shar'

NC1607154196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1333 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 16 Jul (MENA)—'Abd-al-Salam al-Kabariti, Jordanian prime minister and foreign minister, stated that he delivered a message today to President Muhammad Husni Mubarak from Jordan's King Husayn. Following his meeting with Pres-

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ident Mubarak this morning, al-Kabariti said that the message deals with recent developments and the ongoing consultation and coordination aiming to give fresh impetus to the peace process and resume it on firm and clear foundations, namely UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and the land-for-peace formula.

Al-Kabariti explained that Jordan wishes to have close coordination with Egypt prior to the Israeli prime minister's visits to Cairo and Amman.

Regarding what Jordan wishes to ask of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, taking into account the latter's hardline positions, the Jordanian prime minister said: We would like to hear what Netanyahu himself has to tell us. We do not want to judge his policies and inclinations merely on the strength of public pronouncements.

Al-Kabariti added: Our position is clear and I expressed it in a news conference three days ago. Jordan views the peace process from a comprehensive angle. There can be no peace that is not comprehensive, nor can it last if it is not comprehensive, balanced, and just.

He affirmed that peace must be based on clear foundations represented by the relevant UN resolutions and the land-for-peace principle.

Commenting on his meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', the Jordanian prime minister and foreign minister remarked that it was a long meeting during which they reviewed recent events and the changes affecting the peace process.

He added: We explained to al-Shar' the Jordanian position in detail and he explained to us the Syrian position on the peace process.

Al-Kabarati added that during a meeting between King Husayn and President Hafiz al-Asad that will be held at the earliest opportunity, a detailed discussion of the coming stage and ways of coordinating positions will be undertaken in order to face all possible developments.

Asked if there has been an easing of tensions in Jordanian-Syrian relations, 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti said that there has been a very real easing of tensions.

On whether his meeting with al-Shar' touched on the recent Jordanian complaint about sabotage acts carried out by some Palestinian organizations in Jordan, he said that this matter was discussed in meetings held on the sidelines of the recent Arab summit in Cairo. He pointed out that today's meeting dealt only with bilateral relations, ways of improving and strengthening them, the peace issue, and what developments we might face in the future.

Asked if he expects the peace process to be frozen until after the U.S. Presidential election, al-Kabariti replied: I have heard from President Mubarak and the Syrian foreign minister that there is a total and absolute commitment to the peace process. He added: Our positions, as Arabs, have become clear and were openly expressed by the Arab summit and by statements issued in the wake of other Arab meetings. He continued: I believe that an opportunity exists and that the peace process will be resumed. This optimism might not be to some people's liking, but I am confident that there is no option except peace. There can be no retreat from peace.

Concerning what Jordan will tell Netanyahu during his upcoming visit to Amman, especially after his statements in the United States that he will make no concessions at all, al-Kabariti said: We will tell Netanyahu that regardless of what he says, the issues he mentions must be subject to negotiations. I believe there is something known as a maximilist position that can be adopted by any negotiating party, but afterwards concessions are made by both parties until they meet somewhere in the middle and can reach a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace.

Asked if Netanyahu's statements do not make him feel anxious, al-Kabariti remarked: I do not claim that Netanyahu's statements are not worrying. They are indeed worrying particularly when he speaks about issues like Jerusalem and the settlements.

He added: Whatever statements are made, Israel must adhere to the agreements it signed with the Arab parties.

Al-Kabariti voiced hope that these agreements will be the foundation on which the remainder of the peace process will be based.

Egypt: Al-Baz Views Inter-Arab Contacts, Netanyahu's Visit

NC1607135896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1150 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 16 Jul (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry undersecretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, affirmed that the ongoing inter-Arab meetings held in Cairo aim to achieve further Arab coordination, in view of the important developments taking place at the present time.

Speaking at Cairo airport after receiving Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', Dr. al-Baz noted that these contacts fall within the framework of the peace process and proceed from the unity of the Arab position that materialized during the recent Arab summit in Cairo.

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He added: We realize the importance of preserving the solidarity achieved by the Arab summit and the need to continue the consultations and exchange of view on every possible occasion and over all developments. Dr. al-Baz added that the recent exchanges in Cairo sought to deepen Arab solidarity and intensify consultations at this important stage that the peace process and the Middle East in general are going through.

Dr. al-Baz added: We are extremely interested in making progress on the road to peace and achieving a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace, for this is what will lead to stability, safeguard security, and reduce the chances of extremists on both sides carrying out acts that reflect despair and frustration.

Regarding reports on a mini-Arab summit to be held in Damascus, al-Baz said that at least for the time being there are no preparations for such a summit. However, nothing prevents a meeting among presidents, who confer on the telephone and exchange messages through envoys. If they decide that a meeting is necessary for any reason they will not hesitate to meet, he added.

Asked about the firm stands which Egypt will emphasize during Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's visit to Cairo, al-Baz said: They are the well known Arab stands, but we hope to hear from him what could open the door to the serious and productive negotiations to which the people aspire. This is because we are certain that the Israeli people themselves are looking forward to continuing the negotiations and sparing them any setback, which would lead to unfavorable results for the whole region, including Israel, and waste an opportunity to make real progress toward peace, he added.

Egypt: Al-Baz on French, U.S. Roles in Peace, Israel's Stand

NC1707113796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0950 GMT 17 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 17 Jul (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, has stated that Israel will change its stand on the peace process and that Egypt does not believe Israel will be so rigid. He pointed out that Israel does not have the liberty to take whatever stands it wants. It is bound by international commitments in accordance with the Madrid conference.

In an interview with the French language AL-AHRAM HEBDO today, al-Baz added that almost five years after the Madrid conference Israel cannot select what it likes and reject what does not appeal to her from among the Madrid agreements. That would be a diversion from the principle of the good intentions of the negotiator.

Such a stand on Israel's part means that the negotiating process will face a dangerous setback that could harm all the sides.

Al-Baz said this is why the belief prevails that Israel will change its stands to go along with its contractual commitments, irrespective of a new government's coming to power there.

Dr. Usamah al-Baz denied the existence of conflicts between Egypt and the United States, which is considered a superpower and a friendly country. He said that there is great scope for cooperation between the two countries as well as areas where interests differ.

He added that all Egypt wants is for the U.S. Administration, Congress, and media to take a fairer stand, despite the special relations between the United States and Israel. The United States must not show bias toward Israel when it makes a mistake, because by doing so it loses its credibility among the Arabs and the people of the region, and in fact among the whole Third World.

Al-Baz described the uproar created over Egypt's acquisition of Scud C missiles through North Korea as a storm in a teacup. He said Egypt was the first country to call for peace, and it does not make sense to accuse it of seeking to start a war in the region. He explained that the whole issue is simply that Egypt tries to preserve an effective defense capability without having this pose a threat to any country. It is not logical for Egypt to become weaker militarily, while Israel continues to arm itself. It is in the interest of peace that there is a military balance among the parties in the Middle East region.

Al-Baz continues: Peace needs to be protected by power. Nothing prevents Egypt from arming itself, as long as it does not try to acquire weapons of mass destruction. In return, Israel must abandon its nuclear weapons or any other weapons of mass destruction it has so that the Middle East region can become free of these kinds of weapons.

He clarified that the United States' support for Israel while accusing Egypt of various things in this regard proves it adopts a double-standard policy.

Al-Baz spoke about Egypt's recent attempts to activate the European role, particularly the French, in the peace process after the Likud government took over power in Israel. He said Europe has a strong influence that cannot be ignored. It is the continent closest to the region and it understands perfectly the interdependence of security and prosperity in Europe and the Middle East.

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He clarified that President Mubarak went to France in his capacity as president of the Arab summit, which was held in Cairo, and that he asked, and will again ask, Europe to play an active role in the peace process, because we are in dire need of this role, al-Baz added.

Usamah al-Baz expects the importance of Europe's role in the Middle East to increase for various reasons, most importantly joint interests, geographic proximity, and ties of culture and civilization, in addition to the European people's interest in the various aspects of the history and ways to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict.

He said Egypt demands a greater European role at this stage in particular because of the absence of the United States from the international arena as a result of the U.S. presidential elections.

Al-Baz described France as the closest European country to the Arab world and said it played a major role in formulating the Florence and Lyons summit declarations. Both these declarations are quite close to the stances manifested by the recent Arab summit in Cairo.

Egypt: Al-Baz Describes Egyptian-U.S. Ties as 'Very Good'

NC1607175496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1515 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 16 Jul (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry undersecretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, has described Egyptian-U.S. ties as very good, adding that it is not true that these ties are going through a crisis. In the meantime, Dr. al-Baz noted that differences that may sometimes occur between the two sides stem from differences in customs and traditions between Egypt and the United States. He pointed out that it is impossible for the customs and traditions of an Atlantic and Pacific nation like the United States to match those of an African, Islamic, and Middle Eastern country from the Third World like Egypt.

In a lecture he delivered last night before the Egyptian-U.S. Friendship Society, Dr. al-Baz added that relations between Egypt and the United States are based on firm foundations. He stressed that the United States is still committed to the peace cause. Dr. Al-Baz pointed out that the Arabs want a more open and fairer U.S. stand that is closer to the facts. He explained that the Arabs are certain that the U.S. stand is not 100 percent impartial and trust that there can be no lasting and durable peace unless this stand is based on justice and fairness.

In his lecture, Dr. al-Baz noted that Egypt and the United States are not rivals, but friendly states, and the United States is the most important partner of the Arabs in the peace process. Dr. al-Baz reviewed in his lecture the developments in the Middle East peace process. He noted that some believe that peace in the region is over, but they are mistaken. Dialogue and contacts must be conducted to eliminate the obstacles impeding the peace process, he added, noting that the peace process will continue and that the region's stability will not be threatened. He added: Despite the impression that some people have, an opportunity still exists and there is no need to rush ahead of events. He added: We must not take the present situation as an established fact or as the final stand of the Israeli Government, an evaluation and assessment process needs to be made.

Dr. Al-Baz stressed the need to give the new Israeli Government some time before judging its stand. He added: We will not make a specific time limit and this will not last for long, but we need to be open-minded. Dr. al-Baz noted that Israel is trying to change the peace concept by placing security ahead of peace, but we believe that the right thing is for everybody to live under a comprehensive and just peace in the region. He emphasized that peace would improve the economic conditions in the countries of the region and enhance cooperation among them, particularly in the economic domain, protection of the environment, security matters, water, and natural resources.

Dr. al-Baz pointed out that Egypt is successfully going through an economic reform process to modernize the production tools, theories, and technology. In the meantime, there is a need to improve the education system and industrial and agricultural production standards, he added, noting that it is important for Egypt to devise its own technology and not depend entirely on imported technology. To that end, cooperation could be established with the United States, Europe, and the countries known as the "tigers" of the Far East.

Dr. al-Baz explained that the recent Arab summit had underlined the [Arab] commitment without reservations to the peace process and succeeded to a great deal in renewing commitments to this principle. He added: We will not place conditions and we want Israel to cooperate and talk with us. He explained that the impression that Israel is trying to give about the Arabs is that by peace they mean a "truce." This, however, is not true because Arabs mean a comprehensive peace and their stand regarding peace is strategic and not tactical, as Israel claims. Dr. al-Baz called for exerting more effort to explain this fact. He added: The Arab world is not that easy for some to imagine that it could be easily controlled by Israel. He called on Israel to treat the Arabs as equals and dismissed the slogans claiming that Israel is technologically and economically superior to the Arabs.

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Speaking about U.S.-Israeli relations, Dr. Usamah al-Baz said they form a relationship of a special and unique nature that does not exist between the United States and any other country, not even Britain itself. Dismissing that this relationship is the result of the Jews' influence on the Americans, he said "the situation is much more complex than this."

The director of the President's Office for Political Affairs said this means that these ties have nothing to do with the U.S. election affairs and that the U.S. elections are not likely to have a noticeable effect on the two countries' relations.

He called for exerting more efforts so that the American public's attention will be drawn to the fact that it is necessary to create a more balanced situation in the United States' ties with Middle Eastern countries. He remarked that any change in the U.S. policy is relative, not absolute.

Dr. al-Baz commented on President Mubarak's expected talks during his next visit to Washington. He said President Mubarak will not play the role of a courier, but will rather put forth an Arab outlook to stimulate the peace process and the negotiations. He will also bring up ideas based on Egypt's experience in dealing with Israel, al-Baz added.

Al-Baz clarified that President Mubarak's views stem from the resolutions of the recent Cairo summit, emphasizing that the U.S. role in the peace process has not retreated and has not changed so far. He said the United States has not announced or mentioned that peace was based on points of reference other than those agreed upon at the Madrid conference and the international organization's resolutions.

The Foreign Ministry's first undersecretary warned that the Arabs will not accept peace if it is unfair to their rights, because they have a will. He added that the United States has huge interests with a large number of Arab countries, regardless of the special U.S.-Israeli relations.

Commenting on Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's expected visit to Cairo, Dr. al-Baz said it will represent a good opportunity for both sides to learn each other's thinking. He added that President Mubarak will put forth the Egyptian-Arab view to activate the negotiations and open the prospects for regional cooperation.

He noted that President Mubarak will raise these ideas objectively and in a manner far from threat, because we believe that this is an ideal way that makes the other side think deliberately before making a decision.

The Foreign Ministry's first undersecretary emphasized that the Arabs are confident in Egypt's capability and competence to play this role. He added that the Arab stands rely on right and that we have no interest other than the establishment of peace and its expansion to cover all parties. He continued: Our pan-Arab interest is consistent with regional interests.

Dr. al-Baz clarified that the Arab-Israeli negotiating will take place according to the point of reference agreed upon in the Madrid conference and resolutions passed by the international organization.

Dr. Ibrahim Fawzi, head of the Investment Authority's executive commission and chairman of the society, addressed the Egyptian-U.S. Friendship Society. He emphasized that the private sector's role in development will expand its role in spending on scientific research and on developing technology to achieve the goals sought by Egypt.

He noted that investment rates increased tangibly over the last six months, thanks to the government's policies and great drive to improve the climate of investment in Egypt so as to attract investors and capital.

The seminar was attended by Arab ambassadors, members of the Egyptian-U.S. Friendship Society, and university professors.

Egypt: Netanyahu Adviser Arrives in Cairo

NC1707111596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1055 GMT 17 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 17 Jul (MENA)—Dori Gold, adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Binyanim Netanyahu, arrived in Cairo this morning on a quick visit that will last a few hours. During the visit he will hold talks with Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, aimed at preparing for Netanyahu's visit to Egypt tomorrow.

Egypt: Ambassador in Israel Discusses Netanyahu's 18 Jul Visit

NC1707090896 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0510 GMT 17 Jul 96

[Telephone interview with Egyptian Ambassador to Israel Muhammad Basyuni, in Tel Aviv, by Fawzi al-Jundi, in Cairo, on the "Dialogue From Afar" program; date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Jundi] We welcome you to the Voice of the Arabs.

[Basyuni] Thank you.

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[Al-Jundi] Could anyone say that Binyamin Netanyahu's visit to Egypt tomorrow is a reconnaissance visit aimed primarily at learning Netanyahu's ideas on the peace process?

[Basyuni] I believe the visit is very important because it is the first time Netanyahu will hear Egypt's stand from the president himself. The president will tell him frankly what our stand is, what is possible, and what is not. We will hear his views and opinions in an attempt to push the peace process on, along its various tracks — the Palestinian, the Syrian, and the Lebanese.

[Al-Jundi] As regards Netanyahu's statements so far, naturally they will constitute a major point of discussion during the talks.

[Basyuni] We care about actions, not words. There are broad lines expressed by the government that have left no room for holding negotiations. But these governmental broad lines are more or less a declaration of intentions; they are not a constitution or law. They are only intentions. It has become clear in many cases that these governmental broad lines have not been implemented; measures contradicting them were taken. For example, the Camp David agreements contradicted the broad lines of Begin's government. The Oslo agreements and the recognition of the PLO also contradicted the broad lines of the Rabin government. So we do not care about statements and broad lines. What is more important is what is going to happen in reality. This is what is being watched now and we are waiting to see what will actually happen.

[Al-Jundi] Netanyahu's visit to Egypt tomorrow is his second visit abroad since becoming prime minister of Israel. It comes only a few days after his visit to the United States. Naturally, this reflects Israel's interest in Egypt's role in the peace process.

[Basyuni] I have actually met the prime minister. I met the foreign minister and almost all the other ministers, including Ari'el Sharon, Benny Begin, and Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay. I found a general trend that appreciates Egypt's focal and basic role in the peacemaking process. They all know very well that Egypt is the key and the basis for the peacemaking process in the Middle East. This is why Netanyahu will visit Egypt to meet President Muhammad Husni Mubarak and present him with his ideas and listen to Egypt's real stands.

[Al-Jundi] Netanyahu's visit comes only a short time after Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's visit to Cairo and talks with President Mubarak. It also takes place shortly after a meeting between the advisers of President 'Arafat and Prime Minister Netanyahu. Does this show that Egypt is trying through its strong contacts with all the sides to create a positive atmosphere to resume negotiations between the Palestinian and the Israeli sides?

[Basyuni] As you know, when Egypt signed the peace agreement with Israel, the objective was not a separate peace deal. It was a step toward achieving a comprehensive, permanent, and just peace in the region. Since Palestine is the essence of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Egypt is trying to find a just solution to this problem so that a comprehensive peace can be realized on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. We are trying to make progress on the Palestinian track and then reach agreement on the transitional stage. We are also trying to realize and implement all the articles of these agreements. There are still three pending issues that we are seeking to realize with regard to the first stage. This is redeployment in the city of Hebron, the broader redeployment slated to take place in August, decreasing the measures and lifting the security siege, establishing the security corridor between Gaza and the West Bank, and releasing the Palestinian detainees held in Israeli prisons.

We are seeking to implement those issues that are still pending and are trying to build on them and continue the final-stage negotiations until we reach the hoped-for objective—agreement on the final stage with regard to Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

[Al-Jundi] Ambassador, during your meetings with the Israeli prime minister and ministers from the current Israeli Government, did you get the feeling that there is a new kind of thinking or action the Israeli Government will adopt toward the peace process, different in method from that of the former government?

[Basyuni] There is confirmation from the government that it will carry out the pledges the former government committed itself to, consisting of the points I have already mentioned. The methods might be different. The prime minister always stresses the principles of security and reciprocity. The principle of security revolves round not having any terrorist operations take place in Israel. The principle of reciprocity, from his point of view, means that if the PLO and Palestinian Authority implement their commitments toward the Oslo agreement, he will implement his commitments and pledges. These are the points he considers when implementing the transitional stage and agreements with the Palestinians. But ultimately he confirms that he will carry out what the former government committed itself to.

[Al-Jundi] To conclude this telephone interview, we thank our guest, Muhammad Basyuni, the Egyptian ambassador to Israel, who was talking to the Voice of the Arabs over the telephone from Tel Aviv about Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's visit to Egypt tomorrow and his meeting with President Mubarak. Thank you.

[Basyuni] You are welcome.

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Sudan

Sudan: Al-Turabi, Iran's Maleki Review Islamic Developments

LD1607121096 Tehran IRNA in English 0948 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 16, IRNA — Iran's visiting deputy foreign minister for educational and research affairs, 'Abbas Maleki, in a meeting Tuesday [16 July] in Khartoum with the speaker of Sudanese National Assembly Hasan al-Turabi reviewed promotion of Tehran-Khartoum ties. The latest developments of the world of Islam as well as issues of mutual interest were other topics discussed by the two officials.

Commenting on difficulties faced by Muslim nations, al-Turabi called for unity and consolidation of ranks of Muslims throughout the globe to confront conspiracies of the enemies. He further added that the Islamic Republic of Iran is the vanguard of the Islamic movement. Referring to Iran's cooperation in different economic, political and cultural fields with the Muslim states, Maleki voiced Tehran's readiness to expand ties with Khartoum.

Maleki arrived in Khartoum Saturday evening and was welcomed by Sudanese Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mustafa 'Uthman.

Sudan: Foreign Minister Meets Iran's Maleki

LD1607133796 Tehran IRNA in English 0704 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, July 16, IRNA — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Educational and Research Affairs 'Abbas Maleki in a meeting here on Monday [16 July] with Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs 'Ali 'Uthman Muhammad Taha discussed issues of mutual interest.

In the meeting, also attended by Iranian ambassador to Sudan Mahdi Marvi, the two sides reviewed bilateral cultural and economic cooperation.

The Sudanese minister thanked the Islamic Republic for training the Sudanese diplomats. He expressed hope that bilateral cooperation in other areas will also be expanded.

It was agreed that an exhibition of Sudanese products be held in Tehran to familiarize the Iranian public with Sudan's capabilities and attract foreign investments.

Maleki on Monday visited the center for training of diplomats at Sudan's foreign ministry and exchanged views with the officials of the center.

He also discussed with the Sudanese Foreign Ministry officials cooperation between the Sudanese center for training of diplomats and the Iranian Foreign Ministry's center for political studies.

Sudan: Al-Bashir Hails Ties to Saudi Arabia

EA1607200496 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Staff Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, the president of the Republic, has described Sudanese-Saudi relations as distinguished. He said the coming days would witness concrete steps to boost all political, cultural and economic activities between the two countries.

In an interview this afternoon conducted by the Saudi magazine "AL-UKAZ" in his office at the republican palace, on reasons for ending the rift, the president expressed Sudan's condemnation of the al-Khubar incident. He pointed out that the incident targeted the entire Muslim world, considering that the kingdom was the custodian of the sacred places of Islam.

Lt. Gen. al-Bashir urged Muslim states to unite in the light of current developments. He also urged African states to overcome frictions between them.

In his interview with the Saudi magazine, "AL-UKAZ," he spoke about efforts made to overcome the differences with Egypt and the neighboring states. He said intensive efforts were being made to normalize relations and ease tensions. [passage omitted]

Sudan: Isma'il Interviewed on Relations With Saudi Arabia

MM1707111696 London AL-WASAT in Arabic 15-21 Jul 96 pp 22-24

[Interview with Dr. Mustafa 'Uthman Isma'il, minister of state at the Sudanese Foreign Ministry, by 'Abd-al-Nabi Shahin in Jeddah; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Shahin] What issues did you discuss with the Saudi officials and what was the outcome of your meetings with them?

[Isma'il] My meetings with the Saudi side were part of the series of constant consultations between the two countries, particularly after the summit meeting between President 'Umar al-Bashir and Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz during the recent Hajj season, and the meeting between President al-Bashir and Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz on the sidelines of the Cairo summit.

The president of the republic had asked for a review of the whole issue of Sudanese-Saudi relations in the political, security, and economic fields. The Foreign Ministry was charged with the task of following up on

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all aspects of this issue, and I explained the results of this review to the Saudi brothers.

[Shahin] What are your views on the recent al-Khubar blast?

[Isma'il] We have condemned and denounced this regrettable incident because it is against human and moral principles, apart from the fact that it is against the precepts of Islam, which urges renouncing violence. That is why Sudan was one of the first states to condemn it, and called for the need to cooperate and coordinate efforts to contain this phenomenon, which has become a grave concern for all the world's states, although we believe that, compared to the other states, the Kingdom [of Saudi Arabia] is safer and more secure.

[Shahin] What is your response to the controversy in the European media about the slave trade in Sudan?

[Isma'il] It is a biased campaign aimed at preparing the international scene for exerting pressure on Sudan, with the intention of either maintaining or tightening the sanctions imposed against it. However, we wonder whether there is a slave trade in Sudan and whether it is in the areas controlled by the rebel movement? If that is the case, it would only be normal for a group of journalists to visit those areas in secret, and make a film on this trade. However, we challenge any impartial side to prove that people are being sold as slaves. We are prepared to work with any mission — international or otherwise — in order to establish the truth, because this is against all divine religions and human morals. We have full details of a plot being hatched now in one of the European states on the issue of slavery in Sudan.

[Shahin] What is this information?

[Isma'il] This plot being hatched in Norway centers around producing a film about slavery in Sudan. Our information shows that a girl from the south called Ighu Atwan [name as transliterated], who married a Norwegian man working with a Norwegian relief agency, brought some films about displaced people in Sudan, with a view to using them to produce a film on slavery. We have also learned that three children from the south living with their families in London left for Norway after their families were paid some money to act in this film. We have the names of these children. One of them is Guy William Ding [name as transliterated]. I do not recall the other names. The idea is that, in the film, these children and others, would tell the story of how they were sold and bought to show that slavery exists in Sudan. We have discovered that one of these children is related to (southern oppositionist) Buna Malwal. Also, another girl from the south called Christine is taking part in the film. It has apparently been decided that the film will be produced in Norway, where the relief agency producing the film has its headquarters. This agency, called NPS [acronym in English in source; expansion unknown], is working with the rebel movement in the south. This plot, which has been monitored by our organs for a long time, shows that the new campaign against Sudan will use slavery as its central theme now that the "terrorism" campaign has served its purpose of imposing international sanctions against Sudan. This issue will enjoy great media interest in Europe and the United States. We would like to assure the people who are doing this that we are aware of their actions and plans. We would also like to tell the people who fall victim to such plots that we welcome them in Sudan, so that they can find out for themselves the truth about the situation there.

[Shahin] Are you accusing specific quarters of working in this plot against your country?

[Isma'il] There are many quarters, such as Baroness Cox who heads the organization Christian Solidarity, which is taking part in campaigns against the regime in Khartoum.

There is also Amnesty International, which we believe has become a political organization, since even British justice decided to prevent it from using British media organs to prevent it from brainwashing listeners. If this is Britain's position toward Amnesty International, Sudan's position should not come as a surprise!

[Shahin] What was Saudi reaction when you expelled Usamah Bin-Ladin?

[Isma'il] Bin-Ladin left Sudan over a month ago, and Saudi Arabia was immediately advised of his departure. That is why this is no longer an issue between the two countries, and has not been raised during my meetings with the Saudi officials, since both countries have now closed the Bin-Ladin file and there is no reason to reopen it or even follow up on it because he has left Sudan for good.

[Shahin] Did Saudi Arabia request that any other measures be taken, within the context of improving its relations with your government?

[Isma'il] I felt that the Saudi officials with whom I met were satisfied with and supportive of the steps undertaken by Sudan, not only with regard to improving its relations with Saudi Arabia, but also with regard to Sudan's policy toward the Arab neighboring states, particularly Egypt. Saudi Arabia supports the normalization of Sudanese-Egyptian relations and did not ask us to undertake any other steps. Instead, it wants us to continue in the direction I mentioned, namely to improve our relations with neighboring states.

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[Shahin] Will there be a review of the measures adopted by the Sudanese Government toward Egyptian institutions in Sudan, such as the Khartoum branch of Cairo University, the Egyptian schools, and the Egyptian Irrigation [Authority's] headquarters, in view of the fact that these are pending issues between the two countries?

[Isma'il] These and other issues will be examined later, when the security issues have been settled. There is an agreement between the two countries to examine the security issues first. If these are not resolved, there would be no point in discussing the other issues, and I expect that other committees will be formed to examine all the issues pending between the two countries after the security committee reaches some specific solutions.

I believe that the remnants of the past between the two countries are not easy to resolve. They are indeed a problem which will take some time to solve, so that relations between both countries can return to normal and the meetings between officials of both countries continue.

[Shahin] Why are the Sudanese Government's positions on expelling the "Arab Afghans" so inconsistent, particularly in view of President 'Umar al-Bashir's reassurances in an interview with AL-WASAT during the recent Hajj period?

[Isma'il] What the brother president told AL-WASAT in his recent interview is correct. All those dissenting voices do not carry as much weight as the president's statement. Everything is proceeding as planned, in line with President 'Umar al-Bashir's directives.

[Shahin] Did the voices which contradicted the president's interview with AL-WASAT come from within the government?

[Isma'il] The press statements in question which contradict this interview were attributed to an authoritative source, a vague expression used by some newspapers to cover their reports, but when one tries to ascertain their veracity, one finds that they have no source, and this is one of the negative aspects of press freedom.

[Shahin] Does this mean that there is no inconsistency in the positions of government officials with regard to making concessions to the international community and abandoning those Islamic groups in Sudan which are opposed to their own governments?

[Isma'il] Not everybody necessarily agrees 100 percent on the same viewpoint. However, when these policies are announced by the president, all government members will abide by them.

[Shahin] Will Hamas and Hizballah members remain in Sudan?

[Isma'il] One of the negative results of opening the doors to the Arab brothers without visas was to give some of those who are opposed to their own governments, some drug addicts, those wanted by justice in their own country, and some extremists the opportunity to come and stay in Sudan. However, as soon as the government became aware of this problem, the open door policy was canceled and the visa system for Arab citizens reinstated. A census of those people living in Sudan was conducted and the policy of not allowing any Arab citizen living in Sudan to undertake any activity hostile to his own country's government was adopted. There is very close monitoring and strict measures to implement this policy and expel anyone in Sudan who does not abide by them, without exception.

[Shahin] Now that Bin-Ladin's departure from Sudan has been confirmed, there are still some questions concerning the events surrounding this departure and how it happened.

[Isma'il] This happened after Usamah Bin-Ladin realized that his presence in Sudan was becoming an obstacle to improving Sudanese relations with some Arab states. Whether this information was passed on to him directly or not, the fact remains that he asked to leave Sudan. This was welcomed by the officials, who made it easy for him to leave the country for good.

[Shahin] How many people left Sudan with him?

[Isma'il] Almost everyone who worked with him.

[Shahin] Is his family not still in Khartoum?

[Isma'il] According to the arrangements made, they were supposed to join him, but I cannot say for sure at present.

[Shahin] What about the results of the census of Arab Afghans living in Sudan?

[Isma'il] When the census was completed, we asked those who were carrying out activities against their own governments to leave Sudan. Some did leave, while others are getting ready to leave. The problem is that some of them do not have any identification documents, and it would be difficult to find a state that would welcome them. That is why it will take some time to find out where they want to go. This is not an easy matter which can be resolved overnight. However, the policy of expelling them is going ahead and will be carried out.

[Shahin] How many of them are there?

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[Isma'il] All the "Arab Afghans" who were in Sudan number less than 1,000 people.

[Shahin] I meant those included in the expulsion order?

[Isma'il] I do not know exactly. You will find this information with the Yemeni authorities.

[Shahin] Did Sudan hand over elements of the armed Islamic groups to Egypt over the past two months?

[Isma'il] I have no idea, but as far as I know, there has been no security cooperation between the two countries prior to the two presidents' meeting.

[Shahin] Do you expect the Security Council to impose harsher sanctions on Sudan when Resolution 1054 is reviewed at the end of this month?

[Isma'il] The sanctions which were proposed to start with were harsher than the sanctions which were [finally] adopted, because some states wanted the resolution to include economic sanctions. Since this resolution was issued, we have been keen to comply with it. We have also contacted the permanent members of the Security Council, and are still holding contacts with those states, such as Egypt and Ethiopia, which are involved in the issue. In our view, we have done enough. That is why we have asked the international organization to lift the sanctions. However, we do not rule out that other states will still insist on maintaining or even tightening these sanctions. We are prepared for all eventualities.

[Shahin] What about the military situation in the south and east of Sudan?

[Isma'il] All is now quiet on all fronts, and there are no battles taking place either in the south or in the east despite the fact that we know that there are hostile actions being planned on our eastern borders with Eritrea which is arming the rebels. However, we are fully prepared to respond to any move at any time.

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Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Saudi-U.S. Relations 'Seriously at Odds' Over Bombing

MS1607124196 London THE TIMES in English 16 Jul 96 p 11

[Report by Ian Brodie: "FBI Chief in New Mission to Secure Saudi Co-Operation"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Washington — The United States and Saudi Arabia, supposedly allies, were seriously at odds yesterday over the investigation into the terrorist bombing that killed 19 Americans, and over the Pentagon's wish to move its forces to safer locations within the kingdom.

The frictions have grown so serious that Louis Freeh, Director of the FBI, was secretly sent to Riyadh, the Saudi capital, for the second time in nine days to plead for greater co-operation. He threatened to take his complaints directly to the ailing King Fahd, who had earlier pledged full co-operation to President Clinton.

The outcome of Mr Freeh's extraordinary mission remained unclear yesterday as an embarrassed silence fell over the Clinton Administration on a sensitive issue that Republicans see as having the potential to become a combative election issue.

Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the Saudi Defence Minister, said his Government was not in favour of moving 5,000 US servicemen, most of them in the air force, to isolated bases far from urban areas. He complained that if they were relocated, the Saudis would have to provide them with new accommodation. In remarks that will be ill-received in Washington, he also said: "This is not correct because security has been achieved, the rule of law prevails and incidents that happen in our country now are only one out of a million compared to what happens in other countries."

Five Americans died last November when a car bomb blew up outside a training centre for the Saudi National Guard in Riyadh, followed by the massive blast three weeks ago when a bomb-laden petrol tanker exploded beside a barracks near Dhahran. The Pentagon said last week that some American forces must be moved as a precaution. The FBI has sent 70 agents to Dhahran since the second bombing but their actions have been severely limited by Saudi authorities. The agents have not been allowed off the US base to interview Saudi civilians, nor have they been given permission to send pieces of the bomb to Washington for forensic tests.

Worse, they have been barred from the investigation. Mr Freeh sought US access to several suspects who were detained by Saudi police, though the FBI does not know how many were held, nor why. The getaway car used in the blast was found six miles away a few days afterwards but the Americans learnt of it only at the weekend.

The lack of collaboration follows Saudi refusals to extend the perimeter in Dhahran beyond 35 yards and the unexpected beheading of four men convicted of the November bombing. The FBI wanted to interview them.

Saudi Arabia: King Fahd Holds Talks With Bahraini Prime Minister

LD1607201096 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, received today at al-Salam Palace His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, prime minister in the sisterly State of Bahrain, and the delegation accompanying him. His highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman conveyed to the custodian of the two holy mosques greetings from his brother His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, amir of the State of Bahrain; His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin 'Isa Al Khalifah, the heir apparent and commander in chief of the Bahraini Defense Force; and the government and people of Bahrain.

The custodian of the two holy mosques reviewed with His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah issues concerning the two sisterly countries, in the interest of their two peoples and the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The talks also dealt with the most important Arab, Islamic, and international developments. The meeting was attended by his royal highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the crown prince, deputy prime minister, and commnader of the National Guard; his royal highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation, and inspector general; his royal highness Prince Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the interior minister; and his royal highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the foreign minister. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia: Crown Prince, Bahraini Prime Minister Hold Talks in Jeddah

LD1607122596 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] This afternoon His Royal Highness 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the crown prince, deputy prime minister, and head of the National Guard, held talks with his brother His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, prime minister of the State of Bahrain, at the Palace of Guests in Jeddah. The meeting examined bilateral relations and reviewed the main issues at the Gulf, Arab, Islamic, and international levels. [passage omitted]

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Iraq: Saddam Discusses World Changes, Arab Decline

JN1707080496 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0705 GMT 17 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Baghdad, 17 Jul (INA)—President Saddam Husayn has said that the new changes taking place in the world show manifestations which we hope will reflect positively on international politics and respect for international law. In a speech broadcast over the Iraqi radio and television networks today on the 28th anniversary of the 17-30 July revolution, the president expressed hope that the manifestations will provide peoples with real peace whose policy is formulated collectively or according to the spirit of the group and goodwill and is based on equality, freedom, equity, independence, and respect for sovereignty.

The president stressed that the aspired peace must under all circumstances be based on respect for the UN charter without burdening it or falsifying it with decisions forced by an opportunity, stick, or funds of this or that international party through the cooperation of narrow-minded people with illegitimate interests and the potential of this or that regional party.

President Saddam Husayn was thus referring to the many manifestations witnessed by the world this year, indicating a relative awakening of the spirit of independence and the tendency to get rid of the call for hegemony which the United States seeks. His excellency pointed out that some of the symbols of this awakening are practicing their policy in the United Nations and in the general international arena and said: These include activities, slogans, and polices in Europe, Asia, and Latin America, which stem from a feeling of anxiety and disgust toward U.S. policy's whims and tendency for hegemony, evil, and domination.

The president linked the interactions which appeared on the surface of events and the theater of international relations against U.S. arrogance with the savage aggression which Washington led against Iraq and said: All this would not have taken place had it not been for the involvement of the United States and its collaborators in the 30-state aggression against Iraq and the call for continued aggression, the actual exercise of this aggression in the two repeated attacks on 17 January 1993 and 26 June 1993, the hateful so-called lines of latitude and the imposition of the embargo on Iraq, and the other attempts which always approached the verge of collision with the glorious and heroic Iraq. [passage omitted]

President Saddam Husayn shed light on the serious decline being witnessed by the Arab arena, especially following the Cairo summit and the resulting retreats and negative stands which threaten the Arab nation's higher interests and national security. He said: Some Arab rulers called for the meeting in Cairo without Iraq and fixed an agenda headed by recognizing for Zionism what the Arabs had rejected since the usurpation of Palestine. The president described the Cairo summit's call on Iraq to stop its threats against its neighbors as a signal from the United States and a repeat of the rigid stand which preceded the August 1990 incidents.

His excellency said those wise men forgot how Iraq is being attacked daily by them or by their masters from foreign military bases inside the Arab homeland and how tens of thousands of children, old people, and women are dying due to the embargo which they approved or endorsed after it had been approved by their masters. [passage omitted]

The president expressed his full belief that the compromises which took place before and during Cairo meeting had failed to take the interest of the people or the nation into consideration and said: Instead of discussing or answering urgent questions in the minds and conscience of the nation, and instead of helping elevate the nation to what God wanted it to be, the lowly ones preferred the path of machinations against the free men of the nation and the heroic people of Iraq of glory, pride, dignity, and virtue. They sank deep in the trench of humility and the so-called quest for a collective stand which some people said would force key figures in the present Zionist entity administration to accept peace with the Arabs. The collective stand was acceptance of surrender in advance.

His excellency said: Had those who issued the Cairo summit resolutions indeed belonged to the Arab nation and were ashamed of their actions, they would not have done what they did. [passage omitted]

His excellency expressed his belief that any dispute between this and that ruler within the nation could be resolved if the foreigner remained outside the border. However, if the foreigner comes as is the case now in some Arab countries, the result will only be more filth, contamination, weakness, and blood that is shed so that the enemy would preserve its balance and existence.

The president explained that the continued presence of the foreigner will widen the gap between the ruler and the ruled through the influence and spearheads of the foreigner. Thus the people will be faced with a slogan which they had not wished before; namely, salvation from the spears of the foreigner and his oppression of free men can be achieved only through salvation from the proxy rulers, the opportunists who have chosen to wallow under the feet of the foreigner.

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Iraq: Opposition Sources Confirm Attempt on Saddam's Life

NC1607153696 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1400 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi opposition sources have confirmed a report published by the British newspaper THE TIMES on an attempt to assassinate Saddam by poisoning him. The sources said Saddam's meals first go through a special laboratory in the palace supervised by a specialized toxicologist. The poison was discovered and its type determined. On searching the cooks, a poison bottle was found in the pocket of one. The sources said the cook was brought before 'Udayy, Saddam's son, who shot him several times and killed him, after questioning for many hours to learn who was behind the attempt and whether his motive was personal. It was discovered that the poison put in Saddam's food was different from the type Saddam uses to kill his opponents.

Meanwhile, Iraqi sources in Baghdad confirmed today that the tyrant Saddam's regime has reinforced its forces and security units in all parts of Baghdad following two recent assassination attempts on the tyrant.

Iraq: Opposition Forces Attack Army Positions, Kill 3

JN1607141496 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In order to force the army to return to its barracks and camps and to prevent it from participating in the crimes of the disintegrating regime, a heroic group from the Islamic resistance forces attacked the positions of the 24th Brigade of the Saddamist 4th Army Corps in al-'Amarah Governorate. Islamic resistance sources said that during the attack, which took place on 2 July, three soldiers from the aforementioned brigade were killed. A number of shelters were destroyed and number of military vehicles were set on fire.

Earlier, a group of Islamic resistance forces repulsed an attack by companies from the 422d Brigade on the mujahidin's positions in the (al-Sulayyim) marshlands in al-Basrah. The newspaper AL-SHAHADAH cited the media center of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq as saying that the heroic mujahidin forced the enemy troops to retreat after killing seven of them, including a lieutenant.

Iraq: Clashes Between Two Islamic Groups in Kurdistan Reported

NC1607184296 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1700 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The newspaper KURDISTAN NWAY reported today that fierce armed clashes erupted yesterday morning, near the [Bettora] checkpoint on the Masifi-Salah-al-Din-Irbil road, between gunmen of the Islamic Movement and gunmen of the al-Jihad Movement. The newspaper said that several gunmen on both sides were killed and some others wounded.

The body of one of al-Jihad Movement's gunmen was later brought to the Sharukh housing complex. The causes of these armed clashes is not yet known.

Iraq: National Accord Movement Leader Interviewed

MM1707094196 London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 14-20 Jul 96 pp 33-34

[Interview with Dr. Iyad 'Allawi, secretary general of the Iraqi National Accord Movement, by Ghalib Darwish in London; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Darwish] Some Iraqi opposition parties' links with the United States are arousing much controversy among Iraqis, and THE WASHINGTON POST report saying you have received U.S. financial support to stage a military coup in Iraq has cast shadows of doubt on the Accord Movement. What is your opinion?

['Allawi] As an Iraqi opposition group we believe in the importance of dialogue with the major states which have influence as regards Iraqi affairs, such as the United States, Britain, the other European states, and Russia. Our dialogue with them focuses on the current situation in Iraq and on highlighting the Iraqi people's suffering under the current regime. The dialogue also focuses on political and material support for the Iraqi opposition and on trying to isolate the Iraqi regime internationally. We do not see any harm to our political work in these contacts. Nor are we scared to state that we have international relations and friendships. A movement that has confidence in itself and its people should be clear in its political rhetoric and international relations. The only country excluded from our political work is Israel. As for the other states, we welcome dialogue with them. With regard to THE WASHINGTON POST report on U.S. support for our movement, we deny any link with that matter or the sums allocated to the opposition by the United States.

[Darwish] So what are your financial sources?

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['Allawi] Why is the question focused primarily on financial sources? Why is it not focused on our work and its results?

The National Accord Movement relies on several financial sources, including some of the movement's branches and the revenues of our publications such as the newspaper BAGHDAD, which cover our needs in Kurdistan and Syria, in addition to the support we receive in the form of financial and material support from Arab and Western states. An Arab state has donated to us our radio studio, a European state has donated computers for the newspaper, and another state pays the rent for our offices. And there are other forms of support which we — as you know — cannot discuss in detail. As we are self- confident, we do not deny receiving financial and material support from Arab and Western states, including the United States. As for neighboring states, we are seeking to develop our relations with them in order to get them to support us in the face of Saddam's danger.

[Darwish] Frankly, is the National Accord Movement capable of staging a military coup given the Iraqi intelligence organs' extensive security measures around Saddam?

['Allawi] Change in Iraq depends basically on the capability of the Iraqi people and their Armed Forces inside the country. As for the opposition's support, in addition to international support, it is aimed at securing adequate conditions in order to bring about this change. We would not be revealing a secret if we said that any attempt to stage a classic military coup in current conditions will fail. However, efforts can be made to prepare for an organized military uprising backed by an all-out mass action and international support.

Some people are promoting a (palace) coup, but despite the difficulty of staging it at present, an organized military change remains a better option, namely by instigating the military to rebel.

[Darwish] The phenomenon of senior Iraqi officers' defection arouses the locals' interest. What has been its effect on the Iraqi Army? And is Iraq still concealing mass-destruction weapons, or is [UN Special Commission head Rolf] Ekeus' plan a long-term one?

['Allawi] The phenomenon of the military personnel's and Iraqi officers' defection reflects the state of personal and total collapse inside the Iraqi Armed Forces. Our offices in Kurdistan daily receive numerous officers of various ranks.

As for mass-destruction weapons, our information confirms that the Iraqi regime is still concealing some mass-destruction weapons, including long-range surface-to-surface missiles. There are 13 missiles mounted on trucks permanently moving from one place to another at several locations inside Iraq. Perhaps the recent confrontation between international inspectors and the regime was to do with the international inspection team's acquisition of information about one of these missiles. According to our military members, the danger of these missiles lies in the fact that they can be fitted with germ and nuclear warheads.

[Darwish] Why is Saddam hiding these weapons?

['Allawi] These missiles achieve three objectives for Saddam: First, to strike at any military rebellion anywhere inside the country; second, they can be used in a critical situation to intimidate or strike at states in the region; third, these missiles are the only remaining mass-destruction weapons in Saddam's possession, thus he will not abandon them readily in the hope of having the blockade lifted in order to rebuild his military might.

[Darwish] What mechanism do you propose for expanding the international inspection and surveillance mechanism?

['Allawi] We believe that the international inspection mechanism has failed to uncover the remaining mass-destruction weapons. Saddam has managed to conceal a number of documents concerning mass-destruction weapons in various places in Iraq and in various houses, and because of the expandability of the implementation [mattatiyat al-tanfidh], he is seeking to play for time in order to conceal more weapons. We believe that, if there is not a specific deadline to locate these weapons, the game will continue for a long time. We believe that to include neighboring states, brief them on all documents concerning mass-destruction weapons, and work with them to study the remaining weapons' danger would be another step toward tightening the noose around Saddam. Iraq's missiles will not affect Washington, London, or Paris; they will affect Kuwait, Riyadh, and Dhahran. Thus states in the region should be more concerned with observing and destroying these weapons than any other world states.

[Darwish] There is an analysis saying that the United States wants to replace Saddam, but it is concerned over the political alternative. What is your opinion, especially as the U.S. elections are approaching, and, as a result, U.S. interest in Iraq could be delayed for a longer period?

['Allawi] We are relying primarily on our own capabilities as regards change. Deferring interest in change in Iraq depends on every state's circumstances. However, in our dialogue with U.S. and British officials we

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sensed that they have no desire to coexist with Saddam Husayn's regime as they do not trust him. This was stressed to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT by the British foreign secretary. We also discussed this matter at the British Foreign Office a few days ago. As for concern over the alternative, I believe that it is a political delusion whose origin I do not know, since all Iraqis want to get rid of Saddam's regime, and the alternative will be Iraqi and from among the Iraqi people, so why the concern?

[Darwish] What is the truth about the disagreements between you and the [Unified Iraqi] National Congress, especially as some people say that you are the alternative?

['Allawi] We have reservations about the work of the Congress, of which we are part and with which we have no disagreement. We want the Iraqi opposition to play its important and strategic role on the international stage. In this context we have initiated a dialogue with the most influential forces and figures in the Congress in order to work to develop a new stage of action and interaction. As for the alternative question, we are not seeking to take anyone's place in the opposition.

We are committed to the National Congress, and we value the efforts being made by Dr. Ahmad al-Jalabi in the service of the Iraqi people's issue. We highly appreciate his perseverance in this connection.

[Darwish] You met with King Husayn recently. What did you discuss with him?

['Allawi] The aim was to convey the Iraqi opposition's view on what is happening in Iraq and on the regional and international situation as well.

[Darwish] Your answer is diplomatic?

['Allawi] King Husayn believes that Iraq's future is left to the Iraqi people. In most of our talks with King Husayn we review what has been achieved at the various informational and political levels.

[Darwish] Iraq's return to the oil market will reinforce its political and economic presence. What is the effect of that on the Iraqi opposition, given that there are international powers banking on Saddam's remaining in power for a longer period to give Iraq a limited regional role in the face of Iran?

['Allawi] The Iraqi opposition will not be affected by the return of Iraqi oil or Resolution 986. We believe that the implementation of this resolution is an opportunity for the opposition to participate with international powers in helping with the distribution of food and watching the Iraqi Government's violations. We have not sensed from the international powers with which we have been in touch any desire to keep Saddam in power. As for states in the region, they are still concerned over the expansionist inclinations of the Iraqi regime, which was excluded from the Cairo summit — evidence of the extent of its isolation in the Arab world.

Iraq: Opposition Distributes Antiregime Leaflets in Baghdad

JN1507145696 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 15 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The jihad groups in Baghdad distributed large quantities of leaflets urging our people to escalate the jihad and increase activities that undermine the Saddamist regime. In their leaflets, the mujahidin also urged the citizens to refrain from paying the unjust taxes as well as the water, electricity, and telephone bills. They also stressed the importance of boycotting the regime's institutions, which have become dens for thieves and sources for supporting the authorities.

Iraqi opposition sources also said a group of youths set fire to the car of criminal Sabah Sabri, a Ba'th Party official at Sector 60 in the al-Thawrah city. The sources said the security organs failed to arrest the group despite the security measures imposed at the scene.

Criminal Sabah Sabri is a member of the Ba'th Party Branch in the al-Thawrah city. He is also one of the criminals who harmed the believers in the area.

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Israel: Levi Expects Meeting With 'Arafat 'Within a Few Days'

TA1707090796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 17 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister David Levi says arrangements for a meeting between him and Yasir 'Arafat are being made these very days and he believes the meeting will take place within a few days. Interviewed by our correspondent this morning, Foreign Minister David Levi said such meetings are not held as a hobby, but because they are a necessity, and efforts are being made to ensure the meeting is productive. The foreign minister added that he has assented to the request of journalist Gid'on Samet to serve as consul general in Philadelphia after the latter promised to loyally represent the government stands.

Israel: Oman, Qatar Expected To Suspend Ties

TA1707102396 (Internet) GLOBES in English 15 Jul 96

[Report by Ora Qoren]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] "Oman and Qatar are expected to revoke their agreements with Israel and close Israeli representations to their countries," business leaders from both sides estimated today.

Business persons in the Gulf reported to their Israeli counterparts of mounting Syrian and Egyptian pressure over the last few days on the Gulf States to close Israeli representations in their countries. The same sources estimated that in the event of compromise between the Arab countries, Israeli representations in Oman and Qatar are expected to be asked "to take an unrestricted leave of absence" without declaring their offices closed.

Qatar officially announced last night in response to pressures that it was freezing its economic representation in Israel. The would-be Omani representative to Israel, who was supposed to have opened his country's offices in Tel Aviv last week, canceled the inauguration and was suspended in Oman on the orders of that country's rulers.

Israel: Gulf States Seen Pressuring Netanyahu To Show 'Flexibility'

TA1707103096 (Internet) GLOBES in English 16 Jul 96

[Report by Ora Qoren]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] "A considerable portion of product growth (in Israel) over the past four years was facilitated by the peace process and the melting away of the Arab boycott. The furtherance of the peace process will ensure that the international business sector continues to take a positive view of the Israeli economy, perpetuating the optimism of Israeli entrepreneurs and consumers — two essential elements for the continued growth of the GNP." It was with this comment that Prof. Hayim Ben-Shahar prefaced his speech to be delivered at the Caesarea Conference, which opened today.

Unless these basic premises are borne out in reality, it is doubtful whether a correct, resolute economic policy will prove effective in offsetting the negative impact of the halting of the peace process upon the Israeli economy, he added. Ben-Shahar participated in the regional economic think-tank initiated by the Harvard University. He also participated in formulating the economic agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

This week, Qatari and Omani businessmen sounded more pessimistic than ever. The series of statements made by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu during his visit to the United States confounded Arab expectations that Israel might give signs of greater flexibility in her positions prior to the resumption of the peace talks. Businessmen in the Gulf emirates instructed their colleagues in Israel to wait until October before proceeding with business engagements. By that time, they suppose, the political negotiations picture will have become clearer.

Meanwhile, rumours abound in the Gulf that Israeli representations recently opened in Oman and Qatar may well be shut down. Businessmen, who have habitually been the pathfinders for the political effort in getting Arab states to throw the doors open to Israel, are once more in the vanguard; except that this time they are sending out warning signals.

Business leaders are citing rumours whereby, failing some progress in the peace talks, the Gulf states will sever their political and economic ties with Israel. Qatar and Oman have meanwhile contented themselves with not opening offices in Israel.

Officials in Jerusalem believe the rumour-mongering is intended to pressure the Netanyahu government into displaying greater flexibility; if this happens, they believe, the offices may not be closed. Alternatively, if the offices are closed and Israel subsequently becomes more politically accommodating, they may be reopened. These assessments, however, are risky. Because if Israeli representatives are put out to grass, or if the offices are closed, a great deal of effort will be needed to get them reopened. Until which time, businessmen may well be deterred by the closure. [passage omitted]

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Israel: Netanyahu To Offer Egypt 'More Prominent' Role in Peace Process

TA1607121696 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 16 Jul 96 p 1

[Report by David Makovsky]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] During their meeting on Thursday [18 July], Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu is expected to offer Egyptian President Husni Mubarak a more prominent role in the peace process in a bid to dampen the current confrontational mood in the region.

Egypt has constantly sought prominence as an affirmation of its self-image as leader of the Arab world. Jordanian officials urged Netanyahu to visit Egypt before Amman or seeing other Arabs as a recognition of Cairo's role.

There are signs that the government is finding that it is in its interest to keep Cairo "inside the tent" by offering it a role, rather than to risk a potentially hostile axis between Egypt and Syria.

In an apparent move to widen a potential coalition, Syria has recently been trying to mend fences between Egypt and Iran, but Cairo has pointedly rejected such overtures.

While Cairo has been a proponent of the Golan talks, it has been an even greater proponent of the Palestinian cause. Over the weekend, Palestinian Authority President Yasir 'Arafat held talks with Mubarak.

If Netanyahu can demonstrate that he is sincere on the Palestinian track, Cairo is likely to respond. So far, the government has refused to delineate measurable criteria that the Palestinians should meet for Israel to lift the closure.

Netanyahu's foreign policy adviser Dore Gold is expected to fly to Cairo today or tomorrow to prepare the visit. He will apparently meet with Mubarak's national security adviser 'Usamah al-Baz.

Meanwhile, Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa left for Moscow to discuss the peace process, stoking concern that he may seek to rouse Russia to take a more vocal stand on the territorial component.

Netanyahu also expressed his "disappointment" at Egypt's hosting the recent Arab summit, which warned of a serious deterioration of the peace process unless Jerusalem changed its peace policies.

In economics, the Egyptian role has been more cooperative than confrontational. Egypt is supposed to host the US-backed Middle East business summit this fall, which is a priority for the Clinton administration . It was also a proponent of the establishment of a Cairo-based Middle East development bank. But, with Netanyahu's muted support for the bank during his Washington visit, Congress will hold back on contributing $260 million, or 21 percent, of the bank's start-up capital over five years, which was designed to finance infrastructure projects.

Sources said the Senate will appropriate no money for the bank, but in a bid to leave open the possibility that such aid could be forthcoming, there will be a symbolic line-item authorization.

Israel: Shahaq Visit Cancellation Seen as Result of Primakov Policy

TA1707104496 Tel Aviv VESTI in Russian 17 Jul 96 p 24

[Report by VESTI and news agencies]

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian President Boris Yeltsin's administration has canceled IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahaq's planned visit to Moscow. The visit was scheduled to take place this month, and the Defense Ministry attached great importance to it. Israel hoped Shahaq's Moscow meetings would be particularly instrumental in promoting weapons sale and upgrade deals.

The Russians explained the cancellation of Shahaq's visit as the result of domestic political problems. Russian officials claimed that in the atmosphere of uncertainty that has prevailed in the Russian Federation's defense structures since the removal of Defense Minister Pavel Grachev and the appointment of Aleksandr Lebed as secretary of the Security Council, a visit by the Israeli chief of staff would be pointless.

Russian sources maintain that a concrete date for Shahaq's visit to Moscow will be set after a new government is formed and a new defense minister is appointed in Russia. Israeli officials fear, however, that the cancellation of Shahaq's visit is the result of Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov's political line seeking to chill the ties between the two countries.

Israel: Cabinet Reviews Netanyahu's U.S. Visit

TA1607143796 Jerusalem GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE in English 16 Jul 96

["Cabinet Communique" released by the cabinet secretariat in Jerusalem on 16 July]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] At the Cabinet meeting today (Tuesday), 16.07.96:

1. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu briefed the Cabinet on his visit to the United States. The Prime Minister

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said that the visit created awareness in the American administration of the new government's positions and led to American public support for the new government. There is a broad base in the American people which identifies with Israel and the government's policies. In his meetings in Washington, the Prime Minister insisted on several principles:

A. The principle of reciprocity — the demand was presented that the other party honor its commitments.

B. It was emphasized that security takes precedence over every other consideration. It was stressed that the Palestinian Authority's commitment in this field cannot be a variable component which is conditional on anything.

C. The issue of Jerusalem — There is a broad public in the U.S. which wants to see a united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty. The strength of support for our position regarding Jerusalem was expressed in the Prime Minister's appearance before the U.S. Congress.

On the issue of Hebron, it was made clear that while we are committed to upholding agreements, we are also committed to security and must formulate our policy on this matter.

The Prime Minister also briefed the Cabinet on concrete matters which were agreed upon as detailed on page 2 below.

Jerusalem Mayor MK Ehud Olmert — who joined the Prime Minister's visit to the U.S. — said that the American administration fully understands that a new government has been elected in Israel, which received a mandate to make peace in a different fashion. This was expressed by U.S. President Clinton as well in his remarks at the press conference. Regarding the issue of Jerusalem, the message of the city's unity under Israeli sovereignty was properly made.

Bank of Israel Professor Ya'aqov Frenkel — who also joined the Prime Minister's visit to the U.S. — said that there were economic meetings with officials from the administration, Congress, and the American business sector. In the background to the visit, the government had decided to cut the budget, and this created a positive atmosphere regarding the government's seriousness in the economic sphere. Our interlocutors were also informed of the government's determination to bring about structural changes in the economy and to lower inflation. We expressed our support for the initiative to establish a regional bank, which was again raised. This was the first visit by an Israeli prime minister to Wall Street in order to encourage investment in Israel. Great interest was expressed on the privatization issue; the Prime Minister delivered an important message on the government's seriousness regarding this issue.

The ministers praised the Prime Minister on his successful visit to the United States.

2. The Finance Minister briefed the Cabinet on the situation in the capital market. He said that in light of the situation in the capital market, the Prime Minister, himself, and the Governor of the Bank of Israel decided that the government would intervene in the capital market in order to moderate market fluctuations. It was agreed that a Finance Ministry-Bank of Israel team would convene in order to formulate proposals for urgent reforms in the capital market. At a meeting with the participation of the Prime Minister, Finance Minister and Governor of the Bank of Israel, the determination to implement the Cabinet's decision to cut the budget was expressed.

Prime Minister's Report on Matters Agreed Upon During the Course of the Prime Minister's Visit to the United States:

1. The Security Sphere:

A. Group on Joint Activities Against Terrorism

There was agreement in principle with the previous government on establishing this group. In a meeting with Secretary of State Christopher, it was agreed that the group's activities would actually begin, and that it would hold its first meeting, at a senior level, by the end of the month.

B. Warning Against Ballistic Missiles

The matter concerns providing Israel with the capability to receive information warning of the launch of ballistic missiles against it, from American satellites. The agreement in principle on this matter had undergone some difficulties, and has not been implemented. In a meeting with the Secretary of Defense, these difficulties were overcome, and the Americans gave the "green light" to implement the agreement. President Clinton set the end of the year as the target date for completing the connection of Israel to the American system.

C. Working Group on Prisoners and MIA's

In a meeting with the Secretary of Defense, it was agreed to establish a working group, within whose framework, a joint effort will be made to obtain information about Israel's prisoner's and MIA's.

D. Nautilus Project

The matter concerns development of a system to shoot down Katyusha missiles by means of a laser. Following doubts about continued development of the project

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which had been raised recently, it was agreed, in a meeting with the Secretary of Defense, to continue developing the project.

2. The Economic Sphere:

A. Framework for Consultations on Privatization

In a meeting with the Secretary of Commerce, Robert Rubin and with the Head of the President's Council of Economic Advisor's, Joseph Steiglitz, it was agreed to establish a joint framework for assessing means of implementing the rapid privatization of the Israeli economy.

B. Framework Concerning the Capital Market

At the same meeting, a joint discussion on assessing means for expanding and increasing the Israeli capital market, was also agreed upon.

Israel: Closure on Palestinian Territories Eased

TA1607151896 Jerusalem GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE in English 16 Jul 96

[Issued by the prime minister's media adviser in Jerusalem on 16 July 1996]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Today, (Tuesday) 16.07.96, the Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Foreign Minister decided to adopt a series of measures to ease the closure, in order to alleviate the economic situation of the Palestinian residents of Judaea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. Details from the IDF Spokesman when available.

Israel: Netanyahu Adviser on U.S. Visit, PA, Syria

TA1607185296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 16 Jul 96

[Interview with David Bar-Ilan, director of the media and policy planning department at the Israeli Prime Minister's Office, by Steve Linde; place and date not given — recorded]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] And now to our interview with David Bar-Ilan, who heads the prime minister's media council. Bar-Ilan says the United States is not pressuring Israel to move forward with the peace process. He says contacts are going on with the Palestinian Authority [PA], but negotiations will not be advanced with the Arabs until Israel sees results in their efforts against terrorism.

Bar-Ilan first tells Steve Linde about the prime minister's trip to the United States, calling it a resounding success.

[Begin recording] [Bar-Ilan] The results of this trip have been beyond all expectations. I don't think you've gotten the right impression here because it's been reported rather stingily, as far as I can see. I'll tell why it was beyond all expectations: because this government is one government that has said exactly the same thing before the elections and after the elections. It has said exactly the same thing in Jerusalem that it has said in Washington, and it says exactly the same thing to the Jews as it says to the Gentiles, and to the administration, and to officials everywhere.

And it is not a message which we expected to be taken very easily, because after all it is many ways diametrically opposed to the message that they had been getting for the past four years. I mean, we stress, of course, the goal is the same. We all want peace, and I'm sure that the previous government wanted peace with security just as much as we do, but the way to get to that peace is different. And, our emphasis on security as something that we cannot ignore while conducting peace negotiations is a new message. I think that the reason for the sympathy shown both by the administration and Congress for this message is that Americans in general are quite sympathetic to new ideas, especially when they feel that old ideas did not work as well as they expected them to work. Even the greatest advocates of the Oslo agreements cannot deny that things have gone awry, that they have not really been as smooth — to put it mildly — as they had expected. And, the fact that there has been this terrorist carnage since the signing of the Oslo agreements I think has given them second thoughts. It is as a result of these second thoughts that they felt sympathetic, or at least gave a sympathetic hearing to Prime Minister Netanyahu's message.

Nevertheless, I was quite pleasantly surprised by the amount of enthusiasm that we met there. I don't there has ever been the kind of public enthusiasm or the kind of receptivity in the administration for any visit of a prime minister. I think it surprised even those in America who didn't expect it to be so. The Jewish community reacted with the kind of welcome that we had, perhaps, no reason to expect but was nevertheless extremely impressive. As you must have seen and heard yourself, the Congress gave Netanyahu the kind of rousing reception that I do not really remember in recent history. The administration, too, really did somersaults in the air to make us feel warmly welcome there.

So, I am not only satisfied, but more than that. I feel that we have achieved our purpose plus.

[Linde] There were reports here in Israel of U.S. pressure on Israel and the prime minister to move forward the peace process. Could you tell us if such pressure exists and where the peace process stands right now?

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[Bar-Ilan] No, there was no pressure at all. I don't think we felt anything of the sort. On the contrary, there was a great deal of understanding for the concerns of this government and the security concerns of all Israelis and, I think, a genuine desire to find new ways to combat the problem so that the peace process can go forward. But there was no pressure whatsoever to move precipitously or haphazardly or carelessly. What we are looking for is, first of all, security. Only that can bring about a genuine lasting peace. And although all of us understand that peace in itself is a component of security, it cannot be component unless security is assured to start with. Otherwise it becomes, really, a contradiction in terms, an oxymoron, a foolishness, an Orwellian attitude rather than anything else, doublespeak otherwise.

So, first of all, what we got across — and I think we got it across very effectively — is that terrorism and peace are incompatible and you cannot think of one as compartmentalized while the other goes on in either direction. So, what we feel the Americans have understood is that, first of all, the problem of terrorism, of violence, of hostilities, both on the Syrian front and on the Palestinian front, have to be resolved before the peace process can really, truly go forward and be advanced so that genuine peace can be achieved.

[Linde] What contacts are currently under way to advance the peace process?

[Bar-Ilan] As you know, Israel has continued contacts with the PA, but again, they are not the kind of, let's say, media-oriented contacts but genuine contacts on the level which they belong; that is, contacts on the ground, so to speak. Emissaries from the prime minister have gone to see the chairman of the PA, Mr. 'Arafat, and they will continue on various levels until we feel there is a genuine desire on the other side to fulfill the obligations they have undertaken, just as there is that desire on our part. I think we'll wait until we see results before we go forward.

The same thing applies to Syria. We feel that the activities of Hizballah are irreconcilable with peace talks as such. That does not mean, of course, that we would not want to continue with peace talks, but our first item on the agenda will be the cessation of Hizballah activities which I think all recognize as activities done by proxy on behalf of Syria. The cessation of these activities should be the first item on the agenda, and I don't think that until there comes this cessation peace can continue.

[Linde] One final solution, Mr. Bar-Ilan. There are, as you know, some Israelis who are concerned about, perhaps, the resumption of terrorism, are concerned about the security situation at the moment and fear that perhaps the intifadah could break out again, and they fear, perhaps, that Syria and Lebanon will decide on war against Israel. What do you say to these Israelis?

[Bar-Ilan] I think that the surest way to bring about a resumption of hostilities is to give away assets without reciprocation. We are stressing reciprocity, and I think that if you continue to ignore the violations of the agreement and the lack of reciprocity on the other side you are inviting war. This has proven to be the case throughout this century, and I think, throughout history. Only those who insist on their rights and on the other side keeping their side of the bargain can really achieve something genuine, solid, and lasting. Those who give in all the time and who feed the hunger of the aggressor usually end up having neither peace nor honor, to use Churchill's phrase, and in general end up without what they strive for. [end recording]

Israel: General Strike Observed Nationwide 17 Jul

TA1707052196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0400 GMT 17 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The general strike announced by the Histadrut to protest the government's economic policy has begun. The strike will be in force until 1600 [1300 GMT] this afternoon. It encompasses all government ministries and offices, local authorities, and regional councils. Banks are also on strike, after the National Labor Court rejected the Banks Association's request for an injunction prohibiting the workers from striking. Employees of border checkpoint and Ben-Gurion Airport bank branches will work as usual. The strike also includes government companies, Israel Electricity Corporation, Bezek, Meqorot, the defense industries, Oil Refineries, courts, and Israel Chemical Works. The universities are on strike, but examinations will be held as scheduled. The Na'amat day care centers are closed.

Late last night the Regional Labor Court ruled that all workers of the Airports, Ports, and Railway Authority, as well as El Al personnel will strike between 1300 and 1400, but our correspondent Ya'el Ayalon has learned from the Histadrut strike committee that due to the late hour of the court decision, the committee will have to study it this morning. Our correspondent Yo'av Aviv reports that the chairman of the Airport Authority workers' committee told him he had received no injunction reducing the duration of the strike, and the Airport Authority employees are therefore on full strike. All flights that were scheduled to take off before midday departed at dawn.

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In the business sector, all industrial plants united under the Industrialists Association will hold a two-hour strike. [passage omitted]

The broadcasts of Qol Yisra'el's Network B and Network D will be discontinued after the 0800 newscast and stay off the air until 1000. The other networks will be on strike until 1600.

Israel: Meridor on Capital Market; Cabinet To Hold Discussion

TA1607130196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Finance Minister Dan Meridor says that the capital market requires thorough and long-term treatment, and that the decision made yesterday was intended to prevent immediate damage only. In reply to a question by our economic affairs correspondent Menahem Friedman, the finance minister said he is convinced that the Bank of Israel will adopt a correct and wise policy which will lead to economic recovery. Bank of Israel Governor Frenkel is slated to address a convention of economists at the Dan Caesaria Hotel shortly.

The finance minister today briefed the cabinet about the crisis in the capital market. The cabinet will hold a special debate on economic affairs within 10 days.

Israel: Netanyahu, Meridor, Frenkel Decide on Capital Market Steps

TA1707091596 (Internet) GLOBES in English 16 Jul 96

[Report by Ze'ev Klein]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Bank of Israel will purchase government debentures on the TASE (Tel-Aviv Stock Exchange) to prevent sharp downslides. This was agreed at a special meeting convened by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu with Finance Minister Dan Meridor and Governor of the Bank of Israel, Ya'aqov Frenkel. The triumvirate decided to spread a "safety net" to prevent the collapse of the bond market and the provident funds.

The meeting debated the possibility of lowering the interest rate to make the provident funds and, indeed, the TASE, more attractive. Frenkel, however, stated that the interest rate policy was designed to bring inflation down to western levels over a few years. He stressed that decisions regarding the interest rate would be adopted in a well-regulated manner, based on a series of economic data such as the money supply, inflation expectations and the level of activity in the economy.

Frenkel explained that the purpose of maintaining a high interest rate was to lower inflation and create the necessary conditions for economic growth, which in turn will affect the future functioning of the TASE, and the capital market.

Since Frenkel was against any immediate reduction in the interest rate as a means of enlivening the capital market, the meeting adopted resolutions in favour of administrative intervention in the capital market, so as to prevent the debentures and provident funds market crisis from getting any worse. Towards dawn, Netanyahu, Meridor and Frenkel agreed on the principles for enhancing capital market stability.

The meeting wound up resolving to institute a mechanism for moderating the undue fluctuation of government bond prices. It was decided that the Bank of Israel will acquire government bonds on the market, so as to moderate exceptional changes in debenture yields, but not for the purpose of ensuring any particular yield.

It was decided that the cash injection deriving from the purchase of the debentures would be offset by the Bank of Israel as required by monetary policy. Injection will be offset primarily by the sale of short-term loans (STLs). The government will approve an amendment to the Short-Term Loans Law, raising the permitted issuance ceiling to the extent required for absorbing the funds. It was decided that additional STL units will be sold only for the purpose of offsetting the injection resulting from the purchase of debentures by the Bank of Israel.

Frenkel recommended making a further cut in the 1996 budget, in view of the huge budget deficit, which by mid-1996 reached NIS [new Israeli shekel] 5.6 billion.

Bank of Israel officials stressed that the intervention in the debenture market was designed merely to moderate market down-slides, and that the Bank does not propose to counter the market trend or bring about a rise in debenture quotations, in case of heavy supply. The intervention is designed merely to moderate downslides and calm the capital market, but not to reverse the market trading trend.

Israel: Deputy Construction Minister To Consider Settlement Growth

TA1607163596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Me'ir Porush, the deputy construction and housing minister, says that construction work within the boundaries of the Har Homa neighborhood in the south of Jerusalem will begin in the next few days. Our correspondent Gay Qotev reports that more than 6,000 housing units have been planned for this site.

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Deputy Minister Porush today toured Jerusalem and its environs and said he would consider construction in the territories and expansion of settlements. He noted that the government's position on the issue is clear, but all factors should be taken into account.

Israel: Intelligence Chief on Hizballah, Iranian Terror, Syria

TA1607174196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The head of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch says that Hizballah has returned to the villages of southern Lebanon. Major General Moshe Ya'alon said Hizballah said is using the civilian population as a cover for stepping up attacks against Israel. He appeared today before the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. David Ze'ev reports:

[Ze'ev] The head of the IDF Intelligence Branch told the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that Hizballah is setting up commands and storing ammunition in homes. Maj. Gen. Moshe Ya'alon is quoted by a Knesset official present at the closed-door meeting. He said Hizballah activity over the past two weeks in southern Lebanon was tied to the Israeli prime minister's visit to the United States, a way for the Syrians to make a diplomatic statement. Gen. Ya'alon said that recently the number of attempts to carry out attacks has increased and preparations are visible, he said, for the possibility of launching katyusha rockets.

The intelligence chief went on to say that Iran's support of Hizballah totals tens of millions of dollars, including arms and training. The major general said Iranian fingerprints in the assistance to terrorist organizations are evident in many countries. In Bosnia, the Philippines, Thailand, China, Turkey, the Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states among other places where Iran is involved in attempts to topple the ruling authorities.

Gen. Ya'alon said the American embargo against Iran is not effective because European countries are not cooperating. He accused Russia and China of supporting Tehran and helping it in the development of nonconventional weapons. The military intelligence chief said terrorism is Iran's top priority despite the bad economic situation there.

Two days before Prime Minister Netanyahu's scheduled visit to Egypt, Gen. Ya'alon said, official Egypt is leaving an opening for Netanyahu to make clarifications, though the Egyptian media have been strong in their statements against the Israeli premier's policies. The Jordanian media have also come out strongly against Netanyahu, while the opposition is using the opportunity to attack King Husayn.

On Syria, Gen. Ya'alon said defense spending comprises a small percentage of the state budget there, which is a sign that President al-Asad does not intend to go to war. The intelligence chief said he would dare to say that the past Israeli government did not make any clear commitment to withdraw from all of the Golan Heights, otherwise al-Asad would have moved ahead with the peace talks.

And, Gen. Ya'alon believes that the Palestinian Authority [PA] is prepared for an Israeli redeployment in Hebron and that the PA head, Yasir 'Arafat, has an interest in maintaining calm in the Hebron area.

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Jordan: Al-Kabariti Expresses 'Satisfaction' With Netanyahu Remarks

JN1707093096 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 17 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanian Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti expressed deep concern over the peace process following his meeting with his Israeli counterpart Binyamin Netanyahu in Tel Aviv [last night]. Al-Kabariti said: I came to Tel Aviv because we are deeply concerned about the peace process. However, the Jordanian official expressed satisfaction with Netanyahu's reassurance that he will respect the pledges Israel made within the framework of the agreements concluded with Jordan, the Palestinians, and Egypt.

Al-Kabariti briefed his Israeli counterpart on his talks in Cairo yesterday with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak. The Israeli prime minister, who will visit Cairo tomorrow, paid tribute to the significant role played by the Egyptian president in the peace process. He announced that his political adviser Dore Gold will head for Cairo today to prepare for his visit. Binaymin Netanyahu asserted that his government will expand the framework of dialogue with the Palestinian Authority and Yasir 'Arafat.

According to an authoritative source, al-Kabariti briefed King Husayn on the results of his talks in Cairo and chaired a cabinet meeting before heading for Tel Aviv. The Jordanian monarch phoned Netanyahu yesterday and stressed the need to pursue the peace process. King Husayn also received a letter from U.S. President Bill Clinton and a phone call from French President Jacques Chirac on the need to resume the peace negotiations.

Jordan: King Husayn Thanks Deputies, Stresses National Unity

JN1707065596 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1722 GMT 16 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn a short while ago sent a message of thanks and appreciation to the House of Representatives speaker on the House's statement regarding the issue of national unity. Following is the text of the message:

Your excellency brother Engineer Sa'd Hayil al-Surur, speaker of the House of Representatives, may God preserve you.

I send to you and to your brothers and colleagues, members of the House of Representatives, my best greetings and sincere wishes of success. I received with appreciation your kind message which included a statement issued by the esteemed House of Representatives on material published in certain newspapers or raised at some seminars on the issue of national unity and on harming it in one way or another.

While appreciating your honest patriotic feelings and those of your brother members of the House of Representatives as well as your care for our national unity, I would like to reemphasize certain facts which I have long talked about, and warned against ignoring or harming their substance.

First, this homeland was established on the values of brotherhood, tolerance, cohesion and compassion among its sons, regardless of birth place, origin, ideological, intellectual, or political trend.

Second, our national unity is one of the sources of this homeland's strength, impregnability, and ability to confront challenges and difficulties. I have said repeatedly that anyone who tries to undermine or harm this sacred national unity will be my enemy forever. It is the duty of every single member of our one Jordanian family to stand firmly against any attempt to tamper with this unity, slander it, or distort its bright image.

Third, our democratic march is a source of our pride and care for entrenching its roots and protecting it against all attempts to tamper with or harm it under the umbrella of tolerance, broad-mindedness, and foresight which characterized the march of this homeland that is dear to us all. I frequently said that the freedom which we talk about is responsible freedom, and that pluralism is the one that adheres to the Constitution and to the spirit of the National Charter. It is the pluralism that emanates from this homeland—pluralism whose national pride refuses to be guided by orders or programs dictated from outside this homeland to harm the homeland persistently and continuously, and greatly undermine Jordan's relations with its brothers in a way that is unacceptable and which violates all the bases of conduct regarding inter-Arab dealings against the background of the Arab agreements reached on the level of the Arab summits and the Arab League.

Moreover, pluralism and respect for human rights do not mean that a particular side, faction, or group can claim the right to monopolize knowledge or claim concern for the higher national interest, nor would it mean that any party or group has the right to claim that it represents this homeland or talks on its behalf, except for those institutions which were granted the right to do so by the Constitution.

All of us here, in this deeply-rooted Arab country, are Jordanians who are equal under the Constitution and the law. People are judged according to the sacrifices

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they offer to this homeland. Citizenship is affiliation, regardless of any other consideration.

I hoped that our newspapers and mass media would always be up to their responsibility, and that they would convey the picture of this homeland and the ambitions of its people, and embody the values and principles on which it was founded and which were inherited from the Great Arab Revolt. I also hoped these newspapers and mass media would be free and enlightened podiums for all honorable writers in our Arab world. However, it seems that a slight minority of these newspapers and writers, and speakers at seminars insist on their deviation from the right path and seek to sow sedition and hatred among the members of the one family, falsify talk about absence of justice and equality, and encroach on the march of this homeland, its symbols, and achievements, and its picture which is purer than the distortion attempts. However, the gap between our hopes and reality is very wide.

While I appreciate your esteemed house for this sincere patriotic initiative, I call for further cooperation and coordination between the legislative and executive authorities to draw up a mechanism capable of preventing all these suspicious attempts to harm our national unity and march of which we are proud and eager to maintain. I have full confidence in the awareness of citizens in this country and their adherence to the values and principles on which it was founded, and their deep awareness of the motives behind these miserable attempts. This confidence makes me fully assured that the sons of our one Jordanian family will stand, as they have always done, in face of all symbols and signs of encroachment on this pure Arab country.

I thank you, as representatives of the people, and appreciate all your responsible and noble motives that led you to hold a meeting and issue your statement.

I regrettably expect that, until all measures are taken in accordance with the principles you decided, some of those who deviated will continue their approach to the point of accusing you of violating and encroaching on the freedom of the press. They will also say you do not have the right to do so, because at this time, some people believe that only they have the right to abuse, distort, make false charges, incite, and harm, and that no other side has the right to deal with, or correct what is wrong.

May God reward you for what you do for the homeland and the march, and may God lead our steps to success and to what is beneficial to this people and what preserves their blessed march. God grants success, and may God's peace and blessings be upon you.

Jordan: House of Representatives Issues Statement on National Unity

JN1607171096 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement issued today, the House of Representatives emphasized that Jordan has always been, and will continue to be, a model for cohesion among the members of the one family, with its Islamic identity and pan-Arab policy under the instruction of its Hashemite leadership and the response of its good people. This was in a statement issued by the House today following the meeting of the House of Representatives that began yesterday to discuss the necessary measures that ensure deepening the national unity, strengthening the internal front, and safeguarding the people's values and morals.

The statement said the people's representatives believe that safeguarding national unity and protecting the values and morals are basic pillars which provide the homeland with strength, ensure the higher interests of the homeland, and defend its sovereignty, security, and stability. They also believe any attempt to destabilize the national structure and undermine the Arab and Islamic values and morals is a crime against the homeland and the nation that should be confronted with full firmness on all levels. The statement urged all constitutional branches of power and the mass media to deal with this subject seriously and responsibly, and called for preventive measures to block the spread or aggravation of this attempt.

Jordan: Government Not To Increase Trade Protocol With Iraq

JN1607185296 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 16 Jul 96 p 9

[By Mervat Suwadah; "Special to the JORDAN TIMES"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Jordan affirmed Monday [15 July] it will not increase its trade protocol with Iraq and that any new deals to provide food and medical supplies can not be included under the agreement which was signed in January.

Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir told a press briefing that the cash-strapped Kingdom "cannot afford" to pay more than the $220 million to finance exports to Iraq.

"The decision was taken because the Central Bank of Jordan could not pay more of its hard currency reserves to provide for Iraqi exports and the situation has not changed since January," Dr. al-Mu'ashshir explained.

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He stressed that deals that were signed recently in Baghdad between Jordanian businessmen and Iraqi importers to provide food, medicine to Iraq, will be financed under the oil-for-food-agreement signed with the U.N. in May.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir was referring to a visit by a Jordanian industrial team to Baghdad last week which resulted in several new deals to provide the Kingdom's eastern neighbour with food and medical supplies.

Head of the delegation and president of Jordan's Chamber of Industry, Khaldun Abu-Hassan, told the Jordan Times upon his return that the "team succeeded in reaching an agreement with Iraqi officials on increasing trade between the two countries."

But Mr. Abu-Hassan, who has asked the government earlier to reverse its decision to cut the trade volume with Iraq, said he was not sure whether the deals the team signed will be included under the protocol.

Jordan's industrial sector was dealt a heavy blow in January when the government, citing mounting Iraqi debt to Jordan slashed trade to just over $220 million from $400 million.

Jordanian industrialists served as Iraq's main suppliers of food and medicine since 1990 when the United Nations imposed stringent economic sanctions on Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait.

Jordan: Adviser Says Latest Donor Financing To Boost Economy

JN1307165796 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 13 Jul 96 pp 1, 3

[Report by Ghalia Alul, "special to the JORDAN TIMES"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The $1 billion development finance which was pledged to Jordan during a consultative group meeting for donor countries in Paris on Wednesday, will have a significant impact on Jordan's financial situation and will strengthen its economic performance.

The amount granted to Jordan falls into the three categories of soft loans, commercial loans and grants with some $600 million pledged to this year and $400 million pledged for disbursement over the next two years.

A high powered economic delegation was in Paris last week to attend a meeting for major donor countries to secure financial aid for 28 infrastructure projects which Jordan hopes to launch before the end of the century.

The projects, proposed under the Kingdom's investment plan include tourism, water supplies, housing, electric power, transport, agricultural services, higher education and health.

The Paris meeting reviewed Jordan's economic situation and praised the country's "good economic management and performance of recent years and it also praised its role in the Middle East peace process," Adil Kan'an, the World Bank's chief of country operations for the Middle East told REUTER Wednesday.

He added that the financing was agreed as a support to the country's broad reform plan which includes trade liberalisation, private sector development, privatisation and infrastructure development.

News agencies reported that in reviewing the Kingdom's economic performance the World Bank emphasized Jordan's need to bring more women into the workforce and promote family planning as well as focus on education and health care.

The bank added that Jordan needs to adjust its policies to make the economic environment more attractive to business and foreign investors.

Yusuf Mansur, economic advisor at the Ministry of Planning, told the JORDAN TIMES Friday that the financing of the investment projects will boost the Jordanian economy especially at a time of "uncertainty in the region" which could slow the economic growth of the countries of the area. He said the amount pledged to Jordan was more than expected and that it would help in reducing unemployment and poverty levels.

This year "will be one of the best years" since the money pledged to Jordan was "more than expected." He added that the "$500 million for 1996 amount to 10 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP)."

Dr. Mansur noted that the money will not be disbursed to the Kingdom in one lump sum saying that it will be transferred at each stage of the development of each project.

He said that most of the projects were proposed in the Middle East and North Africa economic summit (MENA) which was held in Amman October 1995.

In a press conference on Thursday, Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti told reporters that the aid to Jordan was accounted for in the budget adding that the decision to grant $1 million was conditional on Jordan's ability to continue with its International Monetary Fund (IMF)-sponsored economic reform programme.

The meeting in Paris, which was attended by 40 countries as well as the IMF, the World Bank and other

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international institutions, was the third to be organised by donor countries to study the Kingdom's economic performance.

Jordan this year started a new three-year economic reform programme which will allow it to receive $295 million extended fund facilities in return for steps to further liberalise the economy.

An IMF official has recently said that the Kingdom was meeting the target of the IMF-agreed reforms and was heading towards attaining the 6.5 per cent economic growth forecast for 1996.

He added that Jordan was on track towards meeting its target of bringing its foreign reserves to $600 million which can cover the import bill for three months.

The structural reform programme follows successful efforts for monetary stabilisation that were agreed with the IMF.

The Jordanian delegation to the meeting in Paris was headed by Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf who was accompanied by Minister of Finance Marwan 'Awad, Central Bank Governor Ziyad Fariz, Economic Advisor at the Prime Ministry Basim 'Awadallah as well as other officials.

Jordan: Information Minister Promises No Further Price Increases

JN1607125996 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 16 Jul 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by Mirvat Suwadah "Special to the JORDAN TIMES"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—In a bid to modify concerns of further price hikes, Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir asserted Monday that a plan to lift state subsidies on bread was the last "austerity measure" the government had to take as part of its economic reform plan.

"By lifting subsidies on bread we have completed the economic plan that was launched in 1989 and Jordanians can be sure that there will not be further price increases," Dr. al-Mu'ashshir told an informal press briefing.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir's comments came few hours before Cabinet members were expected to submit proposals for cutting spending in their ministries to the prime minister as part of government measures to contain a JD100 million budget deficit.

However, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir stressed that applying restraints on public spending will not be sufficient to cover the deficit and that the government still has to come up with an "annex" budget and ways to finance the deficit.

"Deputies will be provided with an annex budget very soon and most likely we will have to borrow to cover the budget deficit," Dr. al-Mu'ashshir pointed out.

Meanwhile, the government's proposal to provide salary increases to Jordanians in compensation for the hike in bread prices received its first positive response.

The Housing Bank announced Monday that it would pay the difference in bread prices to all of its 8,000 employees and their families in line with the government drive to compensate Jordanians for the planned price raise.

The government, which estimates the average consumption of bread of each Jordanian at 103 kilo-grammes annually, says each citizen will be entitled to JD15 in compensation yearly.

Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti announced last week that the compensation will take the form of salary increases for government employees and army members. He said Jordanians that are not included under these two categories will be provided with coupons that can be exchanged for cash at local banks. So far, the government repeated assurances and justifications for raising bread prices have apparently failed to defuse the widespread opposition for the move.

On Monday, Islamic Action Front deputies called for an "urgent meeting" of the Lower House of Parliament to discuss the issue.

"We were surprised by the statements of prime minister on Thursday in which he totally ignored the opinions of the deputies who earlier expressed to Mr. al-Kabariti their opposition to his plan," said a statement addressed to Parliament speaker and faxed to the Jordan Times. "Therefore, we would call for an urgent meeting to discuss the issue," the statement said.

Opposition parties and various public interest groups are also expected to meet on Tuesday to discuss "measures" to fight the government plan.

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Lebanon: President al-Hirawi Leaves for Damascus To Meet al-Asad

NC1707091396 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0815 GMT 17 July 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Lebanese-Syrian summit will be held in Damascus between Presidents Ilyas al-Hirawi and Hafiz al-Asad. It will tackle the latest regional developments as well as the ongoing preparations for the Lebanese parliamentary elections. President al-Hirawi left for Damascus this morning to meet President al-Asad. Their last meeting was on 12 June, 10 days before the Arab summit in Cairo.

Lebanon: Hizballah Said To Surrender Bodies to Germany 17 Jul

NC1707062996 Paris AFP in English 2213 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Beirut, July 16 (AFP)—The Iranian-backed Hizballah will surrender to Germany the bodies of two Israeli soldiers killed in Lebanon in the late 1980s in an operation supervised by the Lebanese government, officials said Tuesday [16 July].

They said the bodies would be handed over to a senior German government official, Bernd Schmidbauer, on Wednesday in exchange for the release of Lebanese prisoners from Israeli jails.

Informed sources said a Lebanese forensic doctor and a German counterpart would inspect the bodies before the handover.

There was no immediate reaction from Hizballah, which has repeatedly said it was holding the bodies of two Israeli soldiers and had offered a trade-off in February if Israel freed Hizballah leaders and other Lebanese prisoners.

But earlier on Tuesday a Hizballah spokesman, reacting to press reports of contacts between Bonn and Beirut, said efforts to secure a swap were underway between the Lebanese and German governments.

Schmidbauer, a secretary of state and coordinator of the German secret services, was to arrive in Lebanon on Wednesday for the handover which would take place at an undisclosed time and location, the sources said.

He had held secret talks in Beirut with senior Hizballah leaders in May after a visit to Iran.

It would be the first time Hizballah returned the bodies of Israeli soldiers killed in Lebanon and the first time the Lebanese government was involved in such a swap.

The sources did not identify the two dead Israelis, but the bodies could be those of Rahamim Alsheikh and Yossef Fink [names as received] who were killed in an ambush in south Lebanon in February 1986.

In exchange Israel would release an unspecified number of Lebanese prisoners it is holding in its jails, notably in al-Khiyam, a former Lebanese army barracks in the Israeli-occupied "security zone" of south Lebanon, they said.

But they would not include pro-Iranian Muslim Shiite fundamentalist leaders Shaykh 'Abd-al-Karim 'Ubayd and Mustafa al-Dirani who were abducted from their homes in 1989 and in 1994 respectively by Israeli commandos, the sources said.

Their fate was linked to the release of Israeli pilot Ron Arad who was shot down over south Lebanon in October 1986 and who is still believed to be alive.

Hizballah has systematically denied any knowledge of Arad. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Fadlallah Says U.S. Prevents Hizballah From Entering Government

LD1607121796 Tehran IRNA in English 1204 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, July 16, IRNA — Hizballah is seeking to participate in the administration of Lebanon but is being prevented by the U.S., said the movement's leading spiritual guide, Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah. He was quoted by the FINANCIAL TIMES Tuesday saying there was an "American veto on the entry of Hizballah into the Lebanese Government."

The U.S. State Department was reported to have reacted strongly to speculation that the Islamic movement may join the administration, but this was said by the paper to have been opposed by Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri. The premier was cited saying he would "simply not do" what the U.S. wanted but that he was against working with a force seeking an Islamic state, even though this is not the professed aim of Hizballah in Lebanon. Fadlallah said the movement, that emerged as a resistance to Israel's disastrous invasion in 1982, "cannot impose our Islam on anybody by force." It would be only "one element" embracing all of Lebanon's communities, he said.

Confirmation of Hizballah's desire to participate in the political life and government of the country came from leader Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah, who was quoted saying the aim was to "achieve independence and prosperity" for Lebanon's people. He said the party represented a "wide and popular trend" not only among poor Shia Muslims in the south, al-Biqa' valley and Beirut suburbs but legitimacy among other communities.

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The popularity and prestige of Hizballah as a socio-political organisation has been rising for the past decade and was widely reported to have been enhanced by its resistance to Israel's 17-day aerial and ground bombing of Lebanon in April.

Beirut's government is considered to be still in transition following the rebalancing of the country's three main groupings after 17-years of civil war in 1989, where more power was ceded to the Sunni prime minister and Shia parliamentary speaker.

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Syria: Information Minister Comments on Netanyahu Remarks

MM1507132896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Jul 96 p 1

[Report by Ibrahim Humaydi in Damascus: "Syrian Information Minister Tells AL-HAYAH: The Arabs' Recognition of Israel Is the Biggest Concession"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian Information Minister Dr. Muhammad Salman has said that there was no "political dimension" to the fact that the five states have agreed to set up a monitoring group for the understanding reached last April, because what was agreed in Washington two days ago is "a continuation of what was started in the aftermath of the Israeli aggression," stressing "Syria's support for any effort aimed at achieving peace and stability in the region."

He told AL-HAYAH that President Hafiz al-Asad's meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu should take place "to crown what has been agreed (between the negotiators) and not to start a sterile debate." He added that the Israeli leader who "makes peace with Syria will be more important in Israel's history than those who helped found the state of Israel." He stressed that to say that Arabs would give nothing in return for Israel relinquishing everything is untrue "because recognizing the state of Israel is the best favor that can be done for it," and he criticized former Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres for "hesitating" and "wasting the opportunity" to achieve peace with Syria. Salman's remarks came in an interview with AL-HAYAH yesterday in which he responded to the Israeli prime minister's basic positions which have emerged in the period between his election statement and the end of his visit to the United States, which has revealed that "there is no difference between his plan and his policies."

Salman said that "what has been agreed is to continue what was started in the aftermath of the Israeli aggression against Lebanon and the Qana massacre," adding that the United States "wanted to give it a political dimension despite the fact that it is a separate issue from the peace process." He added: "Syria supports and strongly participates in any effort aimed at achieving peace and stability in the region."

In response to Netanyahu's remarks that he is prepared to meet al-Asad, he explained that "these positions, statements, and proposals are only a preamble intended to torpedo the peace principles which have been agreed by those concerned and to torpedo the U.S. initiative. The leaders should meet to crown what has been agreed (at lower levels) and not to initiate a sterile debate."

In response to the Israeli prime minister's insistence on linking peace to security, Salman explained that peace in the Middle East "would provide peace and stability and would provide the elements of trust between the region's peoples. We are confident that the international community, and particularly the European states, now supports Syria's and the Arabs' efforts to safeguard and advance the peace process." He urged those concerned with achieving peace in the region "not to allow Netanyahu to either reverse or torpedo the peace process because the region's stability and security is a basic concern of the peoples of the region, Europe, the United States, and the whole world. That is why the international community as a whole has an interest in the peace process, in order to create stability and security." Salman added that Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, that is, back to 4 June 1967 lines in the Golan, in accordance with Resolution 425 in south Lebanon, and back to the 1967 borders in Jerusalem, would make peace possible in the region.

On his response to Netanyahu's call for negotiations "without preconditions", he said: "This call is an attempt to bypass the principles of peace, because the land-for-peace principle, the Madrid principles, and the international resolutions are not preconditions. Instead, they are the terms of reference, agreed in 1991, for negotiations between the sides concerned." He said that Netanyahu's remarks in the United States that "Israel would give the Arabs 100 percent in return for the Arabs giving zero percent" is "a historic lie," and explained that the Hebrew state "has not given the Arabs anything, and, by withdrawing from the Arab territories occupied by force, would be implementing international legitimacy to achieve peace in the region rather than making a concession." He added that "recognizing Israel, is the biggest concession and favor that the Arabs can make."

The Syrian information minister criticized the former Israeli prime minister for his "hesitation and lack of courage" in the negotiations with Syria. He said: "Had Peres been courageous and sincere in his intentions regarding peace with Syria, peace would have been achieved. By hesitating, he wasted the opportunity and the efforts of the past five years," adding that "the Israeli leader who makes peace with Syria will be more important in Israel's history than those who helped found the state of Israel."

Syria: Commentary on Israeli Settlements Expansion 'War' on Peace Process

JN1607142096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 16 Jul 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: At the recommendation of Netanyahu's government, the council of the heads of the Zionists settlements in the occupied Arab territories announced plans to build new settlements and expand the old ones in order to settle half a million Jews in the West Bank and Gaza Strip over the next few

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years. Before he left for Washington, the Israeli prime minister met with the officials in charge of the Golan settlements. He urged them to expand their settlements and promised to channel the necessary funds. During his talks with President Clinton, the Israeli prime minister turned down a U.S. request to stop the settlement drive in the occupied Arab lands. He announced that he will honor the pledges he made to the voters, foremost of which is accelerating the settlement activity throughout the alleged Torah land of Israel.

Clearly, Israel's plan to build more settlements is closely related to its attempts to shirk the peace process and the foundations and objectives of this process. Through Netanyahu, Israel rejected withdrawal from the occupied lands, specifically from the Golan, southern Lebanon, and the West Bank. It publicly announced that Jerusalem will remain its eternal capital.

The foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration states, who convened in Muscat, announced their commitment to the resolutions of international legitimacy, which do not sanction occupation of the lands of others and call for not recognizing or accepting any situation resulting from the Israeli settlement activity, given that it entails no rights or obligations. The Arab ministers noted that erecting settlements and bringing in settlers violate the Geneva conventions and the Madrid framework, and retard the peace process.

In fact, Netanyahu government's announcement of plans to intensify the settlement drive is tantamount to declaring war on the peace process. We all remember that former U.S. President George Bush and Secretary of State James Baker confronted the Shamir government when they said that settlement activity is the antithesis of peace and a stumbling block that should be removed. They made it clear that settlement activity alters the features and demographic structure of the occupied Arab territories and attempts to evacuate their residents and Judaize them.

We are aware that the Palestinian self-rule authority now controls only 6 percent of the lands of the West Bank and Gaza. Thus, we realize the great danger threatening the lands of the Palestinian people. Such expansion of settlements will divide the West Bank and isolate its cities from each other and from the rest of the areas. Moreover, the Palestinian peasants will be driven from their homes and their lands will be usurped. Thus, the fait accompli will be imposed by force. Inevitably, the settlement drive is the spearhead of Netanyahu government's onslaught against the peace process with the aim of uprooting it.

The United States, which sponsored the peace process and committed itself to achieving its objectives and implementing the resolutions of international legitimacy, bears a special responsibility in preventing the undermining of the peace process. The international community as a whole expressed grave concern over the Israeli Government's ideas. The European Union, Russia, China, and many nonaligned countries considered the positions of this government a danger to the peace process. However, Netanyahu returned from the United States, claiming that he found an understanding and favorable response there and that no one in Washington opposed the Jewish settlement schemes. Hence, it is not enough for the U.S. Government to say that its position on and commitment to the foundations of the peace process are unwavering. It should also dot the I's and follow the example of the former Bush government by denouncing the settlement activity as the antithesis of peace. It should state that this activity should be halted once and for all. Israel will prove its seriousness about peace only through adhering to, and not bypassing or abandoning, the foundations of this process.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Taleban Defector Claims Pakistan Backing Taleban 'Militia'

BK1707064696 Hong Kong AFP in English 0629 GMT 17 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, July 17 (AFP) — A top Taleban militia pilot who defected to the Afghan government with his MiG 21 fighter jet has said he switched sides because he could no longer fight against his own countrymen.

General Abdol Jalil, 30, said he decided on the dramatic move because he could no longer tolerate battling with "foreign" forces against the Afghan people.

"I came here with my plane because I did not want to fight against my own nation under the influence of foreigners," he told a press conference late Tuesday [16 July], hours after landing in Kabul.

Jalil, who was deputy commander of the Taleban air force and commander of its fighter command, swooped over Kabul in the camouflaged jet before landing at the main air base near here and surrendering himself and his plane to government forces.

The defection of the pilot, his plane and four air-to-air missiles may have dealt a serious blow to the Taleban air force, which has only four or five airworthy planes, military analysts have said.

Sitting stiffly in an armchair surrounded by government guards, Jalil asserted that Pakistan was backing the Islamic Taleban militia, which has been battling the government for nearly two years.

"Not only the Pakistani government but also individual Pakistani traders are physically and morally supporting the Taleban," he told reporters during the 15-minute public appearance.

He added that when the Taleban sprang up in 1994, he had seen Pakistani aircraft engineers in civilian clothes at the airport in the southern city of Kandahar helping the militiamen fix their planes.

The Kabul government has in the past frequently accused Pakistan of backing the militiamen financially, militarily and logistically, a charge which Islamabad has always vehemently denied.

Jalil said he had been planning his daring escape from the Taleban's Kandahar headquarters for 10 months during which he had kept in constant contact with the Kabul government.

"My arrival here was no simple thing, it took months of planning for a way to join the other heroic officers of the Islamic State of Afghanistan," he said.

He said that although he had escaped alone during a routine training exercise out of Kandahar, other Taleban pilots were also "totally fed up" with life under the militiamen.

Jalil also alleged that Taleban pilots, who have bombed civilian areas of Kabul three times since November killing more than 60 people, were forced to fly the missions against their wills.

"They did not want to, but they had no choice because their families were being held hostage," he said haltingly.

President Borhanoddin Rabbani on Tuesday promoted Jalil, who was absorbed into the Taleban air force when the militiamen seized Kandahar in late 1994, to two-star general in recognition of his "heroism."

"We ask other pilots of he opposition to come over to the side of the Islamic State and to strengthen the peace process," presidential spokesman Abdul Aziz Murad said announcing the pilot's promotion.

Jalil's high-profile and spectacular defection has acted as a massive morale and propaganda boost for the newly-formed Kabul coalition government headed by former opposition leader Golboddin Hekmatyar, observers here said.

Three weeks ago, Hekmatyar threw the country's opposition parties into disarray by joining his former enemies in battered Kabul and taking over the job of prime minister.

Many analysts here saw the goal as one aimed at ensuring the political survival of the parties to the deal and at forming a stronger military alliance against the Taleban who control about half the country.

Jalil's defection and the loss of the precious aircraft could prove to be a fresh body blow to the Taleban at a time when the movement needs to boost morale and examine its military and political strategies towards Kabul and the country's other warring factions, analysts said.

"It must have been fairly humiliating to be betrayed by one of your top men who also, to add insult to injury, took some of their most valuable hardware with him," one western source said.

Afghanistan: Taleban Defector on Foreign Presence, Taleban Problems

LD1607192096 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This morning a MiG-21 fighter of the Taleban air force, piloted by Brigadier General

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[as heard] Abdol Jalil, joined the Islamic army. This fighter plane landed at Kabul airport at 1130.

The pilot told a news conference held this afternoon: Due to his (?faith) in the Islamic government, and out of patriotism, he was long looking for an opportunity to stand up on the side of the country's other military men.

General Abdol Jalil, who completed his education outside the country, was discharging his duty as deputy head of the Taleban group's air force and commander of the Hunter Battalion [Ghond-e Shekari] at Kandahar airport.

In reply to a question he said: Foreigners are engaged in technical tasks in the Taleban's military forces. They repair broken down vehicles and make them operational. A large number of these foreigners, who wear Afghan uniform and resemble the Taleban, are engaged in exploration in order to gain access to the underground resources and mines of Afghanistan in the area under the control of this group.

Regarding the condition of the air and ground forces of the Taleban group, he said: Most of the pilots and military personnel are fed up with the treacherous policy and behavior of this group, and they seek an opportunity to join the Islamic army.

As a military officer, he declared his allegiance to the Islamic state and pledged to work against every aggression and action perpetrated against the country's independence and freedom.

At the end of the news conference the rank of major general was presented to the above pilot. This was approved by the high authority of the Islamic state.

Afghanistan: Rabbani Calls For Negotiations To Settle Issues

LD1507213596 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1625 GMT 15 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, attended a memorial service this afternoon for the martyred Lieutenant General Allaoddin Khan, held in Sherpur grand mosque, where he spoke about the lofty spiritual level of martyrs and the epic-making activities of the martyred lord, Lt-Gen Allaoddin Khan. May we draw your attention to this speech:

[begin Rabbani recording] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. [passage omitted]

Islam, as a school, at every stage and at every juncture of history, presents new sons and new heroes. In the presence of all the grief-stricken mojahedin assembled here, I announce and declare this fact to the enemies of Islam and to their conspirators — the trench of Islam will not remain unoccupied.

The path taken by Allaoddin and his colleagues and his comrades in arms — this jihadi and mojahed path will continually be followed after the martyrdom of a hero. Although we have lost our greatest hero, we are still confident that the martyred comrades in arms will never allow mercenary conspirators and powers hostile to Islam and Afghanistan to attain their unholy objectives. [passage omitted]

We are witnesses to most shameful conspiracies. In order to defeat the mojahedin and our fighters and in order to rob our Muslim people of the gains of jihad, conspiracies were launched to defame Muslims and to incapacitate the mojahedin who from the very start announced their readiness and devotion to serve God, the people, their religion, and the homeland to reach their lofty and grand objectives after setting up the Islamic State. Conspiracies were launched. Difficulties were created. Shameful interventions were made to which all of our people are witness.

The world also knows this. But the international media refrain from exposing these conspiracies and interventions. Vast propaganda efforts were directed against the mojahedin and against our Muslim nation. They attribute allegations to our mojahedin and our heroic fighters, but make no reference whatsoever to the real causes of the bloody catastrophes which have been taking place in our country. These conspiracies continued but failed one after another. The mojahedin worked hard to neutralize them.

Finally, they launched another evil conspiracy, under the name of Taleb, creating a group whose objectives were completely clear. They declared war against the mojahedin and against jihadi formations everywhere. They aimed to eliminate the gains of the Islamic revolution and the Islamic jihad. These mercenary conspirators were foolish and ignorant to the extent that they could not even hide the objectives of their masters. They were saying everywhere that the jihadi commanders should be eliminated. The jihadi formations and commanders must be destroyed and the nation should be disarmed. And the nation should not have the right to defend itself against foreign conspiracies. The assassination of dear brother Alhaj Allaoddin was the objective of one of these unholy conspiracies. [passage omitted]

In the present circumstances, taking part in government is not a privilege but a responsibility and an acceptance of difficulties. We hope that other dear brethren can join this axis of peace. Those who are deceived under the name of Taleb, those with the slightest Islamic faith in

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their consciousness and those with the slightest (?mercy) in their hearts toward their (?persecuted) people, we ask them too, to put themselves no longer at the service of the enemies of Islam and to embark no longer on sedition and assassinations. We ask them to come and sit at the negotiating table and sort out all issues through talks.

As far as the government and the Islamic State are concerned, we have a duty, for the sake of national unity, to prevent the disintegration of the country and not to waste the gains of the revolution. To all of those groups which have not yet taken part in the government and state, we extend an invitation to sit down together and draw up a common plan for resolving the country's problems. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Afghanistan: Jonbesh-e Melli Ready for Talks 'With Any Group'

LD1607145196 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jonbesh-e Melli [National Movement] of Afghanistan is absolutely against the country's disintegration.

On the telephone from Saudi Arabia, 'Asadollah Mazari, Jonbesh-e Melli's deputy head of political affairs, said that the Jonbesh-e Melli is totally against the country's disintegration and will not allow anyone to work for the disintegration of our historic country.

'Asadollah Mazari added: We favor peace and security in Afghanistan, and General Dostam wants to see peace and security restored in the country.

He added: For the sake of the restoration of peace and security in the country we are ready to hold talks with any group.

Afghanistan: Council Sets Up Economic, Infrastructure Commissions

LD1507192996 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 15 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Chaired by Brother Hekmatyar, prime minister of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, a session of the Council of Ministers was held today [14 July].

The prime minister's press office reported that at this session agenda subjects were discussed. The session heard a report by the minister of water and electric power on the present difficulties of people with regard to power supply and the progress of work in this respect. The session issued necessary instructions in this connection.

The session also discussed the purchase of basic materials such as flour, cooking oil, rice, and sugar. The session set up a commission, consisting of representatives from the presidential office, Finance Ministry, and Commerce Ministry, with a duty to purchase these commodities from other countries and to import them. These commodities should be sold to the people with no profit. The finance minister was assigned to prepare a report on the results of commissison's work and to submit it to the forthcoming session [of the Council of Ministers].

Following the agenda, the session made a decision assigning the Communications Ministry, with the assistance of the Chamber of Commerce, to assess the possibility of importing and operating a 120-line satellite telephone system in order to resolve the country's [telecommunication] problems and to restore links with foreign countries.

The session also decided to reactivate the central [grain] silo in order to supply baked bread to people and thus to create facilities for Kabul citizens.

The session also decided that, in order to strengthen the government's financial situation and to recover government money owed for many years by enterprises and individuals, the Finance Ministry, the Afghanistan Bank, the Justice Ministry, and the economic adviser in the Prime Minister's Office had been assigned to prepare a report in this connection and to submit it to a future session of the Council of Ministers for a decision on future action.

To control inflation, stabilize market prices, and stabilize the rate of the afghani against foreign currency, the session discussed a proposal by the Afghanistan Bank. The session set up a commission consisting of members from the Finance Ministry, the Afghanistan Bank, economic representatives from the presidential office and the Prime Minister's Office, and a professor from the economics faculty of Kabul University (?to investigate the situation) and to prepare a report for the next session of the Council of Ministers.

India

India: Air Force Chief Plans 'First Ever' Official Visit to Israel

BK1507144096 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 13 Jul 96 p 7

[Report by Dinesh Kumar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chief of air staff, Air Chief Marshal Satish Kumar Sareen is scheduled to visit Israel on a first ever official visit by all Indian service chief. Although mutually acceptable dates are still being

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worked out, indications are that the week long visit will take place later this month.

Air Chief Marshal Sareen told this newspaper that he would be visiting Israel but declined to mention the dates saying it was still being worked out. His visit comes in response to an official visit made by his Israeli counterpart Maj Gen Herzle Bodinger in March last year. Gen Bodinger, who arrived on a week long official visit on March 27 last year, was the first Israeli service chief to visit India. He had flown a sortie in the Russian made Mig-29 air superiority fighter during his visit to several air bases during his visit.

The Indian defence establishment has been keen to strengthen defence ties with Israel. In December last year, the assistant chief of air staff (operations) visited Israel to evaluate certain sub systems. A proposal to post an air force officer of the rank of group captain as military attache in the Indian Embassy in Tel Aviv has been awaiting government clearance for over six months now. But there has been a constant exchange of defence delegations ever since diplomatic relations were established between the two countries in 1993.

In July last year, former defence secretary K.P.A. Nambiar visited Israel marking a first ever official visit at such a level to that country. A high level Israeli defence delegation headed by Lt. Gen. David Ivry, a former air chief and the number two man in their defence establishment, visited India in August 1994.

The Indian Air Force has been seeking Israeli help to strengthen perimeter fencing of their air bases. For example, an Israeli team visited Jamnagar air base where the Tactics and Air Combat Development Establishment (TACDE) is located. The IAF [Indian Air Force] has projected a requirement for an air combat manoeuvring instrumentation (ACMI) which is likely to be inducted before the year end from Israel. This will be the first major buy of a defence equipment from Israel The ACMI is meant to help monitor and fine tune tactics devised and developed at TACDE.

India: External Affairs Minister—Delhi 'Will Not Obstruct' CTBT

BK1607134496 Madras THE HINDU in English 16 Jul 96 p 1

[Report by K.K. Katyal]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India will not obstruct the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT], now on the anvil, and expects all countries to respect its stand against the present draft and to ensure that no obligations are imposed on it. Also, India will continue to maintain the nuclear option, so as to be able to deal with any threat to its security. It will not accept any curbs on the option, if others do not bother about the obligation to eliminate nuclear weapons.

This was how the External Affairs Minister. Mr. I.K. Gujral, spelt out in Parliament today India's views on the treaty, on which the next — and the crucial — round of discussions is due to begin in Geneva on July 29. Recalling the statement of the India's Permanent Representative at the Conference on Disarmament (C.D) on June 20 — that New Delhi could not subscribe to the treaty in its present form and is unable to accept any obligations affecting its sovereign rights — he said that India would remain engaged in discussions to guard against constraints on its freedom of action. He elaborated India's "responsible approach" thus: "We do not want to be 'spoilers' or obstruct the treaty, but we have to safeguard our national interest. If other countries reach their own consensus, that is their sovereign decision. We would expect that all countries will respect our decision and ensure that the Treaty, with which we will not be associated, not impose any obligations on India."

Then there was the assurance that the government treated it as an issue of vital national concern and was fully conscious of its responsibility—"we have demonstrated the strength of our conviction and national resolve in the past. We remain confident that we can do so again." Mr. Gujral thus confined himself to an expression of hope that the CTBT obligations would not be thrust on India but did not deal specifically with various contingencies. It was not clear, for instance, whether India would go to the extent of vetoing the CTBT if there was no change in the present provision, that the treaty could not enter into force without India being a party to it. What if others go ahead with this provision? Will India merely abstain from voting or say "no"? The implications will be qualitatively different in each case.

The External Affairs Minister referred to India's active and constructive participation in the Geneva negotiations and the various proposals put forward by it — to the effect that the CTBT must be truly comprehensive and not leave loopholes, permitting nuclear weapon states to continue refining and developing their arsenals at the test sites and laboratories, and that it be placed in a universal disarmament framework, as part of a step-by-step process aimed at achieving complete elimination within a time-bound arrangement.

It was a matter of regret, he said, that the CTBT, in its present form, did not do justice to the mandate of the C.D., relating to the process of nuclear disarmament, along with the steps to prevent proliferation in all its

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aspects. India's proposals, put forward in a constructive way, and not on a take-it-or-leave-it basis, sought a commitment to engage in negotiations, aimed at elimination of nuclear weapons within a "reasonable time-frame but we are willing to negotiate it with other countries". As seen by India, such negotiations were not part of the CTBT, but it could act as a catalyst. "Without such a commitment reflected in the CTBT, we are convinced that this treaty will be an end in itself rather than a first step on the road to nuclear disarmament. Unfortunately, the nuclear weapon states remain unwilling to make any commitment with regard to eliminating their nuclear arsenals," said Mr. Gujral.

Drawing attention to the linkage of India's nuclear policy with its security concerns, the Minister said that New Delhi had never accepted the notion that reliance on nuclear weapons was legitimate for some countries for their security but not for others. This stand was also reflected in India's rejection of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. India, it was pointed out, had exercised a policy of unparalleled restraint after the peaceful nuclear explosion of 1974, but continued to maintain its nuclear option so as to be able to cope with any threat to the country's security. "We cannot allow this option to be restricted in any manner if other countries remain unwilling to accept the obligation of eliminating their nuclear arsenals. We are deeply conscious of the fact that other countries in our region continue their weapon programmes, whether openly or in a clandestine manner. On the basis of recent statements and developments, we have been obliged to conclude that the nuclear weapon states have no intention of giving up their nuclear weapons. This makes it inescapable that our national security considerations will be the governing factor in our decision making."

While responding to queries by members in the Rajya Sabha, Mr. Gujral stated the nuclear policy thus: "We do not need nuclear weapons now. Tomorrow I don't know. What type of weapons India needs to defend itself in the short run and the long run would depend on our threat perception."

India: Gujral Replies to BJP Demand on Developing Nuclear Bomb

BK1607063096 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 15 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India today said it does not need nuclear weapons now but would keep its nuclear option open depending on the threat perception in the future, even as it (?urged) foreign countries not to impose any obligations on it to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT]. Responding to the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] demand that India should develop the atomic bomb, the external affairs minister, Mr. I.K. Gujral, said the need of the hour was to assert national sovereignty so that freedom of action was not constrained in any manner. Cutting across party lines, members welcomed the continuity in the government's stand against signing the CTBT in the present form. The minister assured the house that the United Front government would not be found wanting in response to India's defense needs.

India: Delhi Reportedly 'Self-Sufficient' in Missile Technology

BK1507122596 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 13 Jul 96 p 9

[Report by Kalam]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has the capability to match the M-11 missiles which were transferred by China to Pakistan. For that matter it can match any missile system in the world," scientific adviser to defence minister A.P.J. Abdul Kalam said here on Thursday [11 July].

"Our missile programme, which is based on the needs of the armed forces, is progressing satisfactorily. In missile technology we are now self-sufficient and self-reliant," Mr Kalam said in an informal chat with newspersons before addressing the 34th convocation at the Indian Institute of Technology [IIT], Powai.

Mr Kalam, who launched India into the space age, said that the Deve Gowda government was according highest priority to the country's missile projects. "No country can exert pressure on us," he asserted.

With regards to the intermediate range ballistic missile, "Agni," he said the technology demonstrator has been tested successfully. This has given the country confidence to make any type of long-range missile systems.

The five missile systems which have been designed and developed by the Hyderabad-based defence research and development laboratory are the surface-to-surface "Agni" and "Prithvi" missiles, "Trishul" and "Akash", both surface-to-air missiles, and the anti tank missile, "Nag." A new air-to-air missile, "Astra," is being designed for the light-combat-aircraft (LCA).

The LCA was scheduled to make its maiden flight in February 1997 and will be inducted into the Indian Air Force in 2003, he revealed.

Later, while delivering the convocation address, he recalled that when the extended range version of the Prithvi reached its right target during a trial, in January.

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it established the "confidence that we can do it irrespective of the various technology control regimes like the missile technology control regime aimed against us."

"India should build commercial and military aircraft on a design-driven programme and not on fabrication or license production mode," he told the gathering.

He regretted that for half-a-century India has remained a developing nation. "So, let us share a dream together, a dream to transform the nation into a developed nation," he added.

According to him this means that the standard of living for citizens should improve, the purchasing power should increase, the expert potential of the country should grow and above all the nation should have high technology solutions for national security and national development through societal missions.

A significant aspect of Thursday's convocation was that the two key figures who made India attain independence in two critical areas, aerospace technology and earlier the atomic bomb project, shared the same dais at the IIT auditorium. They are Mr Kalam and R. Chidamabaram, chairman of the atomic energy commission who is also the chairman of the IIT's board of governors.

Mr Chidambaram said there was a tendency to retard progress in the name of safety. According to some persons in the West, safety and safeguards were two sides of the same coin, he stated.

Chetan Rai of the computer science and engineering department won the President of India medal for standing first.

India: Deve Gowda Rules Out Further Reduction in Petroleum Prices

BK1507162496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 15 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister has ruled out any further reduction in the price increase of petroleum products. [sentence as heard] Justifying the decision in the Lok Sabha today, Mr. Deve Gowda, appealed to the users of LPG [Liquefied Petroleum Gas] and other petroleum products to cooperate with the government to wipe out the mounting oil pool deficit. He said even with this increase, the prices are lower than in many of the countries in the region.

Winding up a short-duration discussion on the issue, Mr. Deve Gowda said the hike was inevitable and as per the notings in the files the previous BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] government was also considering price hike urgently because of the circumstances. Highlighting the immediate needs of the poor, Mr. Gowda asked those who can to share a bit in meeting the basic needs of the common man. To meet this objective by the turn of the century, his government had decided to increase allocation by 15 percent every year to develop the most backward areas.

Earlier, members made several suggestions including reduction in consumption of petroleum products and austerity measures to find a long-term solution to the problem. Dual pricing was also suggested by a member.

India: Home Minister's Statement on Congress Raised in Parliament

BK1507095596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 15 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The home minister, Mr. Indrajit Gupta, has denied making any statement that LPG [Liquified Petroleum Gas] prices will come down. Responding to a scathing attack made by the opposition and the Congress [party], Mr. Gupta clarified that different versions were published in the newspapers about his press conference at Madras. What he responded to a query from the press was that the prices of LPG might come down and the government is considering the matter. So, he, said, it does not amount to making a policy statement outside the house, or an impropriety committed by him.

Reacting to the Congress members charges, Mr. Gupta categorically denied giving any foregone conclusion about Lakhubhai Pathak case [involving Narasimha Rao in corruption charges] now in court. He also assured that he does not have any intention of interfering in the internal matters of Congress and said that he was sorry if such an impression was carried.

The parliamentary affairs minister, Mr. Srikanta Jena, also told the members that the prime minister did not meet any pressmen in Calcutta and there was no question of committing any impropriety from the statement allegedly attributed to him.

The issue dominated the zero hour with several opposition members demanding the resignation of the home minister. The Congress members took serious exception to what they called interference in their party matters and said that they will not put up with such observations any more and their party's support for the government should not be taken for granted. The speaker, Mr. P.A. Sangma, observed that after the clarification by the home minister and parliamentary affairs minister, the matter did no constitute any breach of propriety.

Rajya Sabha also witnessed noisy scenes at the reported remarks of the home minister. Several Congress members expressed shock over Mr. Gupta's remarks and al-

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leged that they amount to interference in the judicial process of Lakhubhai Pathak case. They demanded that the home minister should come to house and tender apology. Intervening, the external affairs minister, Mr. I.K. Gujral, said home minister will make a statement in the house on the issue later today. He clarified that the government does not propose to reduce the hike in LPG prices. Earlier, some Left party members opposed raising of the matter in the house and said that the issue is a matter between the Congress president and the United Front. When a CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] member was not allowed by the Congress members to make his submission, the house witnessed an impasse for about 15 minutes.

India: Bengal Seen Obstacle to Growth of BJP

Calcutta SAPTAHIK BARTAMAN IN BENGALI 15 JUN 96 pp 15-16

[Article by Sukharanjan Sengupta:"BJP Has No Hope of Getting Anything in This State"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At this moment the biggest question in Indian politics is; what is the future of the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP]? The other parties in the Lok Sabha repeatedly questioned BJP's perception of itself as India's leading party in the debate on the confidence motion on the government of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. It was pointed out that BJP has no existence in West Bengal besides its signboards. BJP did well in the last election in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam, but they lost their position in this election. The party has no place in the states of Tripura, Manipur, Nagaland, Meghalay and Arunachal Pradesh. BJP did not do very well in South India. These facts are true, but merely from a mathematical point of view. If the stage of Indian politics was determined by mathematical calculation, then how is it that the Communist Party of India [CPI] and the Communist Party of India-Marxist [CPM] with their combined 30 to 50 seats have played such an important role in Indian politics for last 30 years? The feelings and perceptions of people are big factors along with sheer numbers.

There have traditionally been two important factors prerequisite to success in Indian politics:

1. How closely a party is involved with international political circles.
2. How good a party's relation with Congress (I) is, regardless of whether or not Congress is in power.

BJP lacks these two powerful weapons and this is its biggest weakness.

In a historical moment of India's political life, the Bharatiya Janasangha [BJS] erased its name at the request of Loknayak Jayprakash Narayan. Janasangha merged into the Janata Party. When the Janata Party broke into pieces, Atal Behari Vajpayee was as determined to keep the name 'Janata Party' given by Jayprakash as well he was eager to keep the name 'Bharatiya' given by his political Guru Shyamprasad Mukherjee.

The reformed Bharatiya Janata Party finally emerged as an alternative to Congress in Indian national politics in 1989. At the time BJP held the key to the formation of a non-Congress government at the center. Jyoti Basu, the leaders of his party and the leaders of all other [non-Congress] parties had to rush to the homes of Atal Behari Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani. If BJP had put forth the condition that they be allowed to join the V.P. Singh ministry, then the so-called 'secular' leaders like Jyoti Basu and others could have done nothing to stop it. They had to accept BJP, otherwise, they had no other alternative but to allow Congress to form the government. In the interest of national unity, BJP did not make demands. At that time the non-Congress 'secular' leaders were full of praise and gratitude for BJP. On the questions of 'Ramraj' and of the building of 'Ram Temple' at Ayodhya, BJP had become used come to 'marching alone.'

At that time, a new definition of secularism engulfed the whole political scene of India. In the color of this secularism, leaders like Gandhiji, Nehru, Jayaprakash and even Indira were stamped as 'communal.' The word 'communal' and 'Hindu' became synonymous. In spite of his unparalleled broadness, Nehru did not place any Muslim in the home ministry. Jyoti Basu placed Mufti Mohammed Syed over the home ministry in the V.P. Singh cabinet. BJP made serious allegations against V.P. Singh and his home minister Mufti Mohammed Syed. This positioning of BJP in the interest of national security made the so-called 'secularists,' who are dependent on Muslim votes, unhappy. Their frustration arose from being unable to wipe out BJP from Indian politics. [passage omitted]

In 1967 DMK captured government power in Tamil Nadu under the leadership of Annadurai. For 30 years that state has witnessed the forward march of the forces of regionalism. Karnataka may step into the path of regionalism at any time. Mr. Bangarappa is waiting for that day. BJP needs to tap this mentality of south India as quickly as possible. The regional mentality in his own party stood in the way of Jyoti Basu becoming the prime minister though he was unanimously elected by the United and Left Fronts. There should not be any hesitation to admit the fact that during the last 20 years CPM has become the party of the Bengalis. The birth of regionalism in Assam came through anti-

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Bengali activities of Assam Gana Parishad [AGP]. The Bengali leadership of CPI and CPM is unable to speak against this. Instead, they requested Assam Gana Parishad leader Profulla Mahanti to join the Deve Gowda government.

Why does BJP, therefore, remain away, holding sacred the memory of [Bengali leader] Shyamprasad? They should try to make an electoral alliance with the Assam Gana Parishad. All other parties reject the sense of values in politics. Why does BJP have to follow a lonely path and at the same time, earn the 'communal' label? The mass killing done by the Assam Gana Parishad in the name 'driving out foreigners' in the Neli village of the Brahmaputra basin just 15 years ago shocked the conscience of the world. Yet the AGP of Prafulla Mahanti is today dear to the hearts of the so-called 'secular' elements of India.

BJP cannot expect anything from West Bengal. This is not because of the organizational weakness of the party in this state, but because Bengalis think themselves more 'clever.' If we look back over the past 100 years, Dr. Shyamprasad Mukherjee is certainly one of the great personalities to whom Bengal is indebted. After Jinnah's call of 'Direct action,' Hindus of the mixed localities of Calcutta were indiscriminately murdered for days. Shyamprasad then repeatedly requested the then chief minister of Bengal, Mr. Suhrawardy to call the army in the streets of Calcutta. Mr. Suhrawardy paid no heed to that request. Shyamprasad then organized the 'Hindustan National Guard' with Hindus and Sikhs which took up the task of protecting and counterattacking. Then the army was called out in Calcutta. The so-called 'Bengali intellectuals' began to decry Shyamprasad as a 'communal rioter.' In June, 1947, when the British government took the decision to partition India and the 'Indian Independence Bill' was passed in the British parliament, Mr. Suhrawardy began the movement for a united Bengal with Sarat Chandra Basu. That particular Act had a provision that if any province did not want to join India or Pakistan and desired to be independent, they could maintain a separate entity. With the help of Sarat Basu, Suhrawardy started the movement for 'an independent sovereign Bengal.' The political foresight of Shyamprasad found in this a conspiracy to [eventually] include the whole province of Bengal in Pakistan. Shyamprasad rushed to Gandhiji and told him that if Suhrawardy gave him written assurance that independent sovereign Bengal would never join Pakistan by popular vote, then he was ready to accept the proposal of an independent Bengal. Otherwise, the partition of Bengal was inevitable with the partition of India. Because, without that there will be no future for the Bengali Hindus. Gandhiji asked Suhrawardy for a written assurance in front of Shyamprasad. Suhrawardy refused to give any such assurance. Gandhiji realized the hidden intention of Suhrawardy and told him that a united Bengal was not possible. Is there any way that the Bengalis can repay their debt to Shyamprasad? But how have the so-called 'intellectual' Bengalis remembered Shyamaprasad? The Bengali 'intellectuals,' many of whom are communist, protested partition, marching in procession on the streets of Calcutta with black flags and shouting "This is false independence." But Bengali communists marched in the streets of Dhaka in favor of Pakistan with Pakistani flags attached to their shirts. It was easy to shout against partition on the streets of Calcutta, but was it easy in Dhaka?

Atal Behari Vajpayee should understand that the character of the so-called 'intellectual Bengalis,' as witnessed by Shyamprasad, the leader of Janasangha, from 1946 to 1953, has not changed. So, BJP should not expect any gain from West Bengal in the next election. But Atal Behari must speak out from every corner of India, statiing that the political sense of values of the Bengalis of West Bengal has become hopelessly corrupted. He has to speak to the nation from the perspective of history and state that after the partition of the country on the basis of the 'Two Nation' theory, India is standing now on the verge of the dangerous 'Third Nation' theory [Stating that Muslims remaining in India constitute a separate nation]. Vajpayee remembers the speech of Shyamprasad delivered in April, 1953 in Patna in which he warned about the danger of the 'Third Nation' theory. The realization of the farsighted Shyamprasad has now become a threat to the country. The danger of it should and must always be told to the nation. Perhaps this could lead the Bharatiya Janata Party to achieve its final destination. The millions of poor and uneducated voters of India love their country more than the so-called 'secular minded' people.

India: TMC To Rethink Gowda Support if State Interests Damaged

BK1607071696 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 15 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Tamil Maanila Congress [TMC], a constituent of the United Front government at the center, today declared that the party would not hesitate to reconsider its support to the Deve Gowda regime if Tamil Nadu's interests were hurt. This came in its political resolution today during the first state conference of the TMC. Shortly after inaugurating the TMC's first state conference in Tiruchirappalli, Mr. Moopanar told newspersons that he did not want his party to align with some party or the other all the time.

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Speaking at the conference, the finance minister, Mr. P. Chidamabaram, said the common man will not be burdened by the hike in the prices of essential commodities. He said the recent price hike of petrol and petroleum products was unavoidable. Tributes were paid to the late Mr. Kamraj and party volunteers were urged to work for the development of the state.

India: Assam Asks New Delhi To Negotiate Peace With 'Militants'

BK1507041896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 15 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Assam government has requested the Center to immediately initiate dialogue with the United Liberation Front of Assam, Bodo and other militant outfits to restore permanent peace in the entire northeast. This was conveyed to the union home minister, Mr. Indrajit Gupta, by the state minister, Mr. Pramod Gogoi, during a meeting in New Delhi. Mr. Gogoi requested reimbursement of expenditure under internal security for Assam during 1990-95 as was done in the case of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. He also sought special central assistance of 30 crore rupees for victims of ethnic violence in Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon.

Iran

Iran: Clinton's Call For Direct Talks Assailed

NC1707083596 Mashhad KHORASAN in Persian 4 Jul 96 p 12

[Unattributed commentary: "Clinton and Direct Talks!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] While Bill Clinton is preparing for the presidential campaign, he is facing several big problems, which, if they remain, will decrease his chance of winning the election. One of these problems is Iran—a problem since the era of Jimmy Carter, a former President from the same party as Clinton. It remains one of the most problematic crises faced by the U.S. political system.

In the past few years Clinton has approved and implemented numerous plans to confront Iran. But all of them—from the trade sanctions, through the approval of a $20-million fund for subversion in Iran, to the plan to intensify sanctions, and other decisions made by his faction in Congress—have all failed one by one and have only inflicted heavy damage on American companies.

None of America's Western allies have been prepared to answer America's plans positively. Even Russia, which has been plunged into debt, has not been prepared to give in to Clinton's pressure and to abrogate its nuclear cooperation agreements with Iran. The extensive cooperation that Germany, Japan, Canada, France, Austria, Italy, and other powerful European countries have with Iran has disappointed Washington and sparked off a wave of opposition and anger by American capitalists against Clinton.

The weapon of human rights violations and of support for terrorism, as well as political efforts, have yielded no results for Clinton. And it is possibly because of this pressure and impasses that Clinton makes contradictory and sometimes vague statements every once in a while and expresses his administration's readiness for direct talks with Iran.

In an interview with two Arab newspapers last week he said he is ready for talks with Iran anytime and that his government does not want to overthrow the Iranian Government, but wants to achieve a change in the Iranian Government's behavior.

This is at a time when our country's high-ranking officials have repeatedly rejected any negotiations with America as long as the American Government continues its savage attitude and its overt hostility toward Iran and the world of Islam. Our country's president recently stated that America is still the same and nothing has changed.

Some analysts believe the main objective behind Clinton's remarks is "to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds" in foreign policy so that in this way he can assume an oppressed air and pretend that he wants peace and talks, but that the Iranian Government is not willing to negotiate. This tactic also has various uses for selling military equipment to the Arabs and for consolidating the American servicemen's foothold in the region, although the explosion at the American servicemen's headquarters in Saudi Arabia showed that they are not safe even there.

Other political analysts believe that such statements by Clinton are designed only for domestic consumption in view of the presidential campaign.

Iran: Daily—Mubarak Statement Shows 'Subservience' to Washington

LD1207131096 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 9 Jul 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Syria's Initiative for Iran-Egypt Rapprochement: Sheer Miscalculation"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Husni Mubarak of Egypt said on Sunday [7 Jul] that Cairo refused a proposed meeting between ministers of Egypt, Iran and Syria. Let us cast a quick glance at Mubarak's reasons for the rejection of the proposed meeting.

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"Egypt refuses the proposal because Tehran still performs operations against some countries, including Egypt."

The reasoning for, and the timing of, the refusal are worthy of consideration.

Mubarak is well aware of the fact that his mentor, patron Bill Clinton, has been clutching at every straw since he took office in 1992 to prove that Iran is a rogue state, supporting international terrorism. But Clinton has been rebuffed several times, first by Moscow, and later by almost all countries on the globe, especially members of the European Union, for he has practically failed to substantiate his claims against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

It is surprising that, having witnessed Bill Clinton's failure, Mubarak resorts to the same nonsensical accusations.

Mubarak and some of the Arab rulers of the region know well that their obedience to Washington and subservience to Tel Aviv have been the main cause of outrage of the Muslim masses in their respective countries. Unable to suffocate people's voices at home, they have to toe Washington's line in externalizing their domestic problems, pointing fingers at other countries.

Since some of the Arab rulers of the region do not have a popular base at home, they rely on big powers to safeguard their thrones. As a result, they consider themselves accountable to those powers, not to their people. This is why they repeat what those big powers, notably the U.S., dictate to them. Hence, Mubarak's recent statement against Iran is a clear example of his subservience to Washington.

Given the timing of his statement, it is clear that he is under the influence of the Zionists in his policy-making. At a time when the Islamic world is threatened by right-wing extremists in Israel, even a layman knows that what is needed is Muslim unity.

It has been against this backdrop that the Islamic Republic of Iran, on the initiative of Syria, reconsidered its policy toward Egypt, giving a green signal to officials to go ahead with exploring avenues for a conditional rapprochement with Egypt. In fact, Iran welcomes Syria's initiative because it considers Muslim unity a must for the survival of Muslim countries vis-a-vis Zionist expansionist policies.

However, Egypt's nonsensical reaction proved that it does not respect Syria's goodwill for strengthening the Arab-Islamic front. In other words, whenever there is a serious initiative on the part of the Islamic countries to encounter the Zionist regime, it is the ruler in Cairo who undermines the initiative. It was Cairo which for the first time laid the foundation for surrendering to Tel Aviv in 1979. Indeed, the awkward situation of the Arabs vis-a-vis Israel today has its roots in the Camp David Accord.

Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Tehran has reiterated that unless Cairo reassessed it relations with the Zionist regime, Iran would not resume relations with that country. This is why Iran severed ties with Egypt after the Camp David Accord.

Our officials in charge of foreign policy have been misinformed on Egypt's Israel policy. The Syrian initiative to help bring about a rapprochement between Iran and Egypt has unfortunately proven to be a miscalculation because the Egyptian officials of today are following Anwar Sadat's policies of the late 70's.

We still advocate better ties with Egypt, but it is not an open-ended offer. Better ties with Egypt are possible only if Cairo distances itself from Tel Aviv and puts an end to its subservience to Washington.

Iran: Commentary—'America Must Go Back To Its Borders'

LD1307162496 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 9 Jul 96 pp 1, 16

[Unattributed commentary: "America Must Return to Its Borders — Part II"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. The point under discussion was that in today's world every country and every nation has gradually come to confront America, and although the objectives and motives may be different, the "common chapter" in all that opposition is to object to U.S. bullying, lying, and hegemonist mentality. Now, it is fitting that we deal with the vast spectrum of that opposition, taking into consideration that there is a difference between the countries that have been under U.S. colonialism and domination and are struggling against the hellish U.S. domination, and those countries that are confronting Washington for commercial interests. Although both categories are carrying out opposition, the "aspirational struggle" of those nations that bear the effects of U.S. atrocities on their flesh and have fully felt the results of Washington's interventions in their lives and homeland is surely more deep-rooted, legitimate, and valuable.

No one has forgotten the heroic struggle of the Lebanese people with the interventionist forces of the "NATO" armies. In that awe-inspiring event, the Lebanese people entered the arena against the Zionist occupiers and their shameless supporters — from America to all the others — and rubbed their noses in the dust, forcing

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the U.S. marines — who had entered the arena in order to consolidate the effects and consequences of Israeli aggression in Lebanon — to flee Lebanon and make American generals overtake the troops under their command in fleeing Lebanon.

Today, almost similar conditions have come about for U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia. From this standpoint, the explosion at the U.S. military headquarters in "Dhahran" is not assessed as accidental. It has all the hallmarks of a warning message from the Muslim and honorable people of Saudi Arabia. The message, to put it concisely, is that America must go back to its borders, and that is even acknowledged by the U.S. media and authorities.

Although Washington was taken unawares by the "Dhahran" explosion, consequent decisions made for resolving its problems in Saudi Arabia show very clearly that it still is not prepared to correct and reform its hegemonist mentality. Reports indicate that the Dhahran explosion has resulted in two sets of decisions.

1. To transfer U.S. military personnel to centers further away from the Saudi Arabian public eye and, probably, to station them in the deserts.
2. Not all the U.S. military personnel should be stationed in Saudi Arabia, but should be proportionately spread [as published] to other countries.

Of course these are merely initial proposals at the moment and there is no certainly that they will be implemented. However, if the statements and conjecture of the U.S. media and officials eventually become official as Washington's definite decision, then this will be their explicit meaning:

1. America has not learned the needed lessons from the recent events and imagines that if American troops get out of range of the Saudi people and take refuge in deserts the issue of America's hegemonist presence in Saudi Arabia will change in essence. In that case, either the designers of such policies are unable to understand the nature of the "aspirational struggles" of the Muslim and honorable people of Saudi Arabia against America, or they believe the Saudi people to be simple-minded and think that if they cannot see the American troops, they will no longer object to the "occupation of the land of divine revelation" by the criminal America and are satisfied with it!

2. The stationing of American troops in Saudi deserts is neither practical nor effective on the main issue. Let us not forget that America has sent all those military forces to the region under the pretext of safeguarding the security of the al-Sa'ud regime. Naturally there has been no problem in safeguarding the security of Saudi deserts in the first place for America to propose such a ludicrous plan. Moreover, if this Washington decision is implemented, it will further encourage the Saudi people to inflict blows against the new centers and it will show that they have been most successful in their initial steps. Such a decision proves America's powerlessness in the face of the Saudi people. It also means that the American troops are taking refuge in the deserts for fear of anti-occupation attacks by the Saudi people.

3. Both the decisions for transferring U.S. troops to the deserts and their transfer to other countries demonstrate that the issue of safeguarding the security of the al-Sa'ud regime is merely a pretext for sending U.S. army troops, and that America's main objective is something else. If America's main aim is to safeguard the security of the Al Sa'ud regime, then logically it should be feeling more danger against the existence of the regime after the "Dhahran" explosion and should be making more effort to increase the safety factor for the al-Sa'ud regime rather than fleeing to the deserts, seeking safety in other regional countries, and leaving the Sa'uds to their own devices in the face of the wrath of the Saudi people.

4. No matter what is decided by America regarding these issues, one thing is certain, and that is that the Muslims in the land of Hijaz [Saudi Arabia] will continue their "aspirational struggle" against the American occupation and will definitely end the "occupation of the land of divine revelation" by the jack-booted Americans. Even if such proposals are merely for "test" and have no practical aspect, the fact that they have been mooted demonstrates that U.S. strategists, in their approach to the realities of the world of Islam, have come to a dead end and are regarding the issues in a totally reactive way. Such plans can never push aside the main issue, that is the "occupation of the land of divine revelation by America," from the minds of the Muslims in Hijaz and other Muslim nations. Undoubtedly the main solution to the issue is, once again, "America must return to its borders" and be warned against political and military intervention in the world of Islam.

Iran: Radio Comments on U.S.-Colombia Relations

LD1307182996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 13 Jul 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Following the U.S. refusal to furnish a visa to the president of Colombia, Ernesto Samper, the crisis in the fragile relations between the two countries has entered a new phase. The Colombian Government issued a communique on Friday 12 July, criticizing the United States' action as one-sided and interventionist, while referring to the opinion of the

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special commission of the Colombian parliament on this issue and the statement by that country's Supreme Court which cleared Mr. Samper of the alleged charges of his cooperation with drug-trafficker. The Colombian Government communique has declared the American move to be directed towards the weakening of that government's efforts in fighting international drug cartels. The U.S. Government accused Ernesto Samper on Thursday 11 July of working for drug-smugglers and receiving kickbacks from them, and announced that it has cancelled Mr. Samper's visa to enter the United States.

According to most political observers, the deepening of the crisis in the U.S.-Colombian relations cannot be just rooted in how to manage the fight against international drug dealers. The fact of the matter is that since the coming to power of Ernesto Samper in 1994, Colombia has adopted a policy more independent from the United States and this has certainly not been welcomed by the United States regime leaders, who have always considered Latin America as their own backyard. Since he became the president, the American political bosses have always been attacking Samper, stopped their economic aid to Colombia and threatened to impose economic sanctions against that country, thus expressing their anger over his becoming the Colombian president.

Of course, the slogan of fighting drugs has always been a Washington propaganda tool, used many Latin American countries. The U.S. has always concentrated its weight of mud-slinging propaganda against those particular states which had, and have, adopted domestic and foreign policy independent of Washington. The military invasion of Panama in 1989 and deposing of the Panamanian strongman, Noriega, under the same pretext was a clear case in point in this regard. Nevertheless, it seems that now international conditions are different from 1989, plus that the political and economic situation of Colombia is not exactly the same as Panama's in 1989.

Meanwhile, global opposition to unilateral and intimidating U.S. policies vis-a-vis independent states throughout the world is spreading daily in all parts of the globe and this is why it seems that the recent move by the United States politicians against the Colombian president is expected to raise a new wave of opposition against the U.S. at least in Latin America.

Iran: Rafsanjani Hails Europe's Stand Against U.S. 'Coercion'

LD1507095296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0330 GMT 15 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Mourning ceremonies marking the sorrowful demise of the prophet of Islam were held last night at the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps' Sarollah Mosque. The president addressed the meeting in which some military and civil officials were present [passage omitted].

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani told the gathering that the analysis and evaluation of the current situation in the world and the place of the Islamic revolution in it clearly indicates that despite efforts and investments to destroy Islam and the Islamic system, the United States and its allies have been defeated on the international stage due to a divine blessing and the fact that the path of God and working for God only has led to victory.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani said the honor of Islam and Iran as well as the repeated achievements of the Islamic Republic system, in contrast to the U.S. anger resulting from its impotence, inadequacy, and incapacity, were the best examples of how divine promises came true. He said: The current stance that European countries and the traditional allies of the United States have taken against this country's coercion and monopolism point to an undeniable reality that proves the innocence and legitimacy of the Islamic Iran as well as the suitable and inevitable European reaction to the humiliating U.S. policy on Europe.

The president praised the heroic actions of the fearless armed forces, in particular the Guards Corps, and said: We are able to defend our ideals from the corrupt powers because we rely on divine blessings, our own spiritual and material investment, and devotion to the school of guardianship [of the supreme jurisconsult — velayat-e faqih].

Iran: EU Urged To Take Firm Stance Against U.S. 'Hegemony'

LD1307092996 Tehran IRNA in English 0857 GMT 13 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 13, IRNA — The English Daily TEHRAN TIMES Saturday [13 July] urged the European Union to take a firm stance against U.S. hegemony in its impending meeting in Brussels.

"Not only they will serve their nations, but they will also serve Third World countries," said the editorial adding, "the Third World will rally behind them in this historic decision."

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Commenting on the U.S. targeting of the Toronto-based mining groups, Sherritt International, under the provisions of the Helms-Burton act, it termed it a dangerous measure threatening the peace of international trade because of its extraterritoriality and because it violates the provisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Welcoming the EU decision not to surrender to the U.S., it referred to the reactions shown by the member countries saying "the warnings must be good enough to bring home to U.S. politicians that they cannot violate intrnational rules and regulations with impunity."

Reminding the U.S. that the world arena is not open to their commercial bullying, the paper said it is not easy to undermine WTO laws without any repercussion.

Emphasizing that the EU and other industrialized countries shoulder a great responsibility at this juncture, it said free trade is threatened by the U.S. politicization of certain issues including human rights and international trade.

The paper deplored that this politicization has become a fashion in U.S. foreign policy today, adding that one day it is Iran and Cuba and another day it is America's strategic allies and economic partners.

"If the U.S. is allowed to continue this policy, we are sure to see other areas of common interest incorporated in the U.S. agenda of sanctions, to be resorted to for unilateral action against any country opposing U.S. hegemony," concluded TEHRAN TIMES.

Iran: Velayati Claims Peace Process 'Dead'

NC1707095196 Paris AFP in English
0902 GMT 17 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 17 (AFP) - Iran's Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati said Wednesday [17 July] he believed the Middle East peace process was "dead," just as his country had predicted.

"The new Israeli government does not even respect the so-called positive points of the talks on the issues of Jerusalem, Golan Heights and the (Jewish) settlements," Velayati said in an interview with AFP. "According to our assessment, the peace process is dead."

"It was cooked up between Israel and the United States," he said, referring to the US-sponsored peace process.

Iran, which has called for an end to Israel, had repeatedly called on Arab countries to avoid making peace with the Jewish state.

Despite initial progress in the peace process, which is based on the principle of land for peace, Israel's new right-wing Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has taken a hardline, saying his country would not turn over any more occupied land.

"What we see in the Middle East proves that we were right about the failure of the peace process," Velayati said. "From the very beginning we held a negative attitude towards that peace process. That proves we were right."

Iran: Tehran—'Compromise Process' Faces Destruction

LD1407151496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian
0948 GMT 14 Jul 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The PLO Executive Committee and the Palestinian self-rule cabinet issued a statement describing the new Zionist regime prime minister's stances as contrary to the compromise process and a threat to that process. The statement warns the Zionist regime, saying: Netanyahu's stances will result in violence and instability in the Middle East.

The Palestinian self-rule and PLO cabinet, headed by 'Arafat, which expected the Zionist regime to pave the way for establishing a Palestinian government after it had eliminated anti-Israeli articles from the Palestine Charter, is now facing conditions where they consider all their expectations to have gone with the wind. Netanyahu has declared explicitly that he will prevent the setting up of a Palestinian government, continue the construction of settlements in the self-rule area and safeguard Jerusalem's unity as the Zionist regime's capital. These stances demonstrate that there is no ground for establishing a Palestinian government on the basis of the compromise process and, moreover, the Zionist regime is seeking to create further restrictions for the self-rule government and continue the policy of expansionism.

The self-rule officials and supporters of the compromise process expected America, as a defender of the compromise process and one which endeavored to eliminate obstacles in its way, exert pressure on Netanyahu, and moderate his stances concerning the signed agreements and the compromise process. After Netanyahu's visit to America and his talks with the White House officials, however, not only did that not materialize but America even took a position of defending Netanyahu's stances, so much so that U.S. President Bill Clinton, contrary to his usual stress on the principle of exchanging land for peace, after his talks with the Zionist regime premier — who has mooted the principle of exchanging security for peace — declared that the Zionist regime's security must be given priority.

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America's position of support for the Zionist regime depicts the reality that despite the difference of opinion between America and the Zionist regime regarding the compromise process, in the final stage, America makes its decisions side-by-side with Israel and against the interests of Arab states. The warning tone of the statement by the PLO Executive Committee and the self-rule Palestinian government shows that their members, understanding that reality and in coordination with the stances of the Arab states adopted in Cairo, are trying to direct the Zionist regime's premier toward reviewing his stances by utilizing existing resources and instruments. Bearing in mind the stances of extremist Zionists, it seems unlikely that these instruments will bring about the desired results. That is why political experts believe that if the situation persists and the warnings given by Arab governments and the Palestine government come to pass, the compromise process — which was based on shaky grounds — will be totally destroyed.

Iran: Irish Speaker Holds Talks With Rafsanjani, Nateq-Nuri

LD1607111096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President [Akbar] Hashemi-Rasanjani today received Mr. Liam Naughten, speaker of the Irish Senate, who is visiting Iran at the head of a senior parliamentary delegation.

Mr. Naughten described the outcome of his talks with our country's legislative officials as useful and helpful to the expansion of cooperation between the two countries' parliaments.

Referring to the volume of trade between Iran and Ireland in the protein product sector, Mr. Naughten said: We hope that the level of cooperation and trade and economic exchanges between the two countries will increase in the future and that we will also be able to extend these cooperation to the technical and industrial sectors.

Mr. Rafsanjani said that greater exchanges of opinion and cooperation between Iran and Ireland's legislative chambers will strengthen agreements between them and familiarize them with each others' stances and resources. He expressed satisfaction at trade cooperation with Ireland and welcomed greater expansion of ties in the future.

Also this morning, Mr. Liam Naughten met and conferred with Majles Speaker Mr. ['Ali Akbar] Nateq-Nuri. According to the Central News Unit, Mr. Nateq-NUri pointed to the many factors shared in common between Iran and Ireland and hoped that relations between the two countries and also Iran's relations with other members of the European Union [EU] will increase under Ireland's rotating chairmanship of the union. He also hoped that Ireland will be able to play an active role in informing the European community about the facts and realities of society in Islamic Iran.

The speaker of the Irish Senate, for his part, said that expansion of all-round relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran is important. He added: We hope that during the period of our EU chairmanship we will be able to inform other members about the facts and issues concerning Iran. Mr. Liam Naughten stressed the expansion of parliamentary relations and formation of parliamentary friendship groups between the two countries. He hoped that parliamentary relations between the two countries will increase even more during the term of the fifth Majles.

In continuation of this meeting, the Irish delegation visited the Majles chamber and learnt about legislative procedure in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran: Irish Senate Speaker, Foreign Minister Hold Talks

LD1607171996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 16 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Relations between Ireland and Iran and their regional and international cooperation, as well as ways of expanding Iran's ties with Europe were the main topics discussed in a meeting today between the speaker of the Irish Senate [Liam Naughten] and Foreign Affairs Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati.

In this meeting, the speaker of the Irish Senate described relations between the two countries in all areas as very good and positive, and called for the further expansion of these ties.

He also stressed that Iran and Ireland should exchange economic and political delegations in order to bolster their cooperation.

Velayati, in turn, referred to the willingness of Iran and Ireland to boost their bilateral ties. He said the upgrading of relations between the two countries, both at bilateral and international levels, was a useful and constructive development.

Our country's foreign minister, moreover, expressed the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to help Dublin bolster its commercial and economic cooperation with the Central Asian and Caucasian countries.

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Iran: Daily Examines India's Refusal To Sign Test Ban Treaty

LD1207140296 Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 10 Jul 96 p 2

[Editorial by Zahra R.: "Nuclear Treaty"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India's refusal to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) should come as no surprise to those who have been aware of the undeclared nuclear power's stand since it exploded an atomic bomb in 1974.

New Delhi's demand that any agreement to end testing must be linked to the global elimination of nuclear weapons has remained unchanged since the days of former prime minister Indira Gandhi.

India on June 20 refused to endorse the CTBT in its present form and demanded several changes in its provision, saying the nuclear monopoly of the Big Five, the United States, Britain, China, France and Russia, must end. It demanded they must give an undertaking to disarm within a set time-frame — a demand rejected by the nuclear powers.

Non-aligned countries unsuccessfully proposed an amendment that would satisfy India by inserting into the treaty's preamble a commitment to 'achieve weapon-free world.'

The commitment would be achieved by a comprehensive phased programme with agreed time-frame for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery at the earliest possible time.

The amendment was immediately rejected by the U.S., the major culprit in the nuclear arena, and France who justify nuclear testing as essential for their 'national security.'

How can it be legitimate for some countries to rely on nuclear weapons for their security while denying this right to others?

Considering the lack of flexibility and sincerity on the part of the West towards its nuclear weapons possession, how can one expect India, and for that matter any other country, to accept any restraint on its nuclear capabilities and make a pledge to comply with the treaty which clearly discriminates between nuclear haves and have-nots [those countries with and without nuclear weapon capability]?

Moreover the treaty puts too much control over verification in the hands of declared nuclear powers, particularly the Europeans and Americans. It is this inequality that robs the treaty of its true essence.

As such, if the treaty negotiations have fallen short of the expectations and aspirations of the world community, the onus for this squarely falls on the nuclear weapon states.

No doubt there should be a comprehensive ban on testings and the international community should push ahead with it because it is in the interests of the region, and in the interest of the world.

But there should be genuine negotiations, and not a sort of dictatorship from the West.

Iran: Official Discusses Latest Accord in Afghanistan

NC1307184996 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 4 Jul 96 p 16

["Exclusive" interview with Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia and Oceania 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, "who directly mediated among Afghan jehadi groups," by unidentified RESALAT correspondent in Tehran; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [RESALAT] Could you please elaborate on the recent accord between Borhanoddin Rabbani and Hekmatyar and the role that the Islamic Republic of Iran played in bringing about this accord?

[Borujerdi] The recent accord is the result of an effort of many months which took shape at the initiative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The negotiations began many months ago on the level of representatives in Tehran and were then followed up in Afghanistan and ultimately resulted in a coalition of the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] and the Jam'iyat-e Eslami [Islamic Association].

The basic principle of the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy is that the solution to Afghanistan's problem should come from within and any solution extraneously imposed by foreign powers is doomed to failure. [passage omitted]

[RESALAT] Recently the United States had invited the leaders of Afghan groups to Washington. Can you give us details of this American plan?

[Borujerdi] Right from the outset there were some doubts among the jehadi leaders of Afghanistan regarding the objectives of the session and the possibility of forging any kind of agreement. Hence most of the groups, such as Sayyaf and Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami, declined to participate in the session.

[RESALAT] Were they not invited or did they not attend?

[Borujerdi] Some groups had announced right at the outset that they would not attend the above session.

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So in order to save their credibility, the Americans did not send invitations to these groups as they were sure that they would not attend. There were some who were invited but did not attend. [passage omitted]

[RESALAT] What was the U.S. objective in arranging such a session?

[Borujerdi] On principle, the United States raised a major question mark regarding its motives. For many years, the jehadi forces in Afghanistan have been involved in internecine fighting. During this time, it was expected that if the United States had any intention of establishing peace it would have been active on the scene right from the beginning. However, for many years, the United States had remained indifferent and precisely when the efforts by the region's countries — especially of the Islamic Republic of Iran — to establish peace were nearing fruition we witnessed this U.S. move. This generated doubts about the U.S. covert moves, that they were aimed at destroying peace rather than ensuring it.

[RESALAT] What is the situation regarding the Afghan Government's relations with Pakistan?

[Borujerdi] It has improved in recent months, but there are major difficulties still in its path. The Kabul government accuses the United States of supporting the Taleban group and Pakistan denies it. We are seeking to bring the views of both sides closer. For this purpose, one of the Kabul ministers visited Islamabad and a Pakistani delegation is scheduled to visit Kabul in the next few days. [passage omitted]

[RESALAT] What is Zaher Shah's [former Afghan king] role among the Afghanistan jehadi groups?

[Borujerdi] Most of the groups have very negative perceptions about Zaher Shah as they believe that they are the ones who have fought for the supremacy of Islam in their country and 1.5 million have been martyred. Thus, they will not settle for anything less than the supremacy of Islam in their country.

[RESALAT] Can you elaborate on the presence of Saudi Arabia in Afghanistan?

[Borujerdi] The fact is that for quite some time, Saudi Arabia has been absent from the Afghan scene for unannounced reasons. Its consulates in Herat and Jalalabad have been closed and its presence has been reduced in Kabul, which is a subject worth assessing.

[RESALAT] What are your comments on Afghanistan's reconstruction?

[Borujerdi] The people of Afghanistan are Muslims who for years have fought to prevent the usurpers from imposing their dominance on them and many have been martyred in the process. Of course, it is the obligation of the international community to play an active role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Iran: Daily Views Value of 'Egypt's Camp David Regime'

LD1307102696 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 10 Jul 96 p1

[Unattributed editorial entitled: "What is the Value of Egypt's Camp David Regime?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. "Any effort to improve relations between Iran and Egypt requires several conditions to be met by Iran. That country must take specific strides to prove that it does not interfere in other countries' internal affairs, does not support terrorism, and has given up exerting pressure on the Persian Gulf regional states." By announcing that, "Usamah al-Baz", the adviser to Mubarak, the head of Egypt's Camp David regime, listed the Egyptian regime's desired preconditions for improving the two countries' relations, and pointed out that Iran intends to destabilize certain Arab states in the Persian Gulf, in particular by interfering in the internal affairs of the UAE and Bahrain. Cairo has numerous documents which indicate Iran's support of Islamic fundamentalists in Egypt.

These statements were made by Mubarak's adviser in response to Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar's statements when he visited Cairo after visiting Tehran, and pointed out that apparently Tehran is seriously seeking to improve relations with Cairo.

This is not the first time that the leaders of the Egyptian Camp David regime have lost their minds and, through their self-agrandizement, imagined that they are probably in a position to set preconditions for improving relations between Iran and Egypt. Many times before the Egyptian regime's officials — whenever they have reached the end of their tether or have been faced with difficulties — have tried to cover up their problems and pretend as if they are in a position where they can throw their weight around or set conditions.

As to what the honorable and brave Egyptian people will do with the Camp David regime in Cairo, that is a matter for the people of the country themselves. However, the trend of Egypt's internal developments demonstrates that Israel's lackeys in Egypt lack any popular base and position. Naturally, under such conditions any sensationalizing by the Cairo regime to attribute the roots of the country's internal event outside its geographical boundaries will still fail to help Israel's lackeys. The intelligent Egyptian people will not be diverted from their chosen path.

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Our question today is this: When the Cairo regime is failing to resolve its own internal problems and, like those powerless and helpless, is attributing everything to beyond its borders, what is the meaning of its ranting and effort to introduce itself as the guardian of the Arab governments in the Persian Gulf region?

Let us not forget that Mubarak has been assigned by America and the Zionists to coordinate the Arabs with Israeli policies in the region within the framework of the Zionists' objectives. However, existing signs indicate that Mubarak and his accomplices have begun this in a most ham-fisted way and have no idea as to how to complete such an assignment.

The repetition of past claims, especially stating what has been raised by colonialists on numerous occasions, clearly demonstrates that the leaders of the Cairo regime have nothing new to say, and so are forced to resort to those same worn-out and inefficient weapons for their own success, maybe to play the role of the "guardian of the Persian Gulf region Arab governments."

Notwithstanding all these issues, let us put the minds of all Israeli lackeys in Egypt at ease as far as their dream of improving relations with Iran is concerned, and point out to them, as explicitly as possible, that Israel's lackeys will take that dream to their graves. Thus, when the main issue is eliminated, there will be no cause for the Israeli lackeys to set preconditions.

The Egyptian regime's ignorant approach to issues demonstrates that they lack the necessary political understanding of the prevailing regional conditions and have no idea what they are saying. When Islamic Iran is not prepared to negotiate with America, counted as the master of Israel and Cairo regime, and ignores Washington's repeated requests for talks, it is impudent of the Camp David regime in Egypt to set preconditions for improving relations with Iran.

Nevertheless, it is meanwhile fitting to remind the Foreign Ministry that Camp David Egypt is nothing but an Israeli lackey and a bell-hop in the region, and cannot be anything else but that. The Foreign Ministry officials must not allow this mistaken idea to enter their heads that getting close to the Camp David regime in Cairo means getting close to the great Egyptian nation. The honorable Egyptian people themselves have problems with this Israeli lackey regime, and there is a big political vacuum between the Egyptian nation and the leaders of a regime which is subordinate to Israel, a vacuum which is never to be filled.

How valuable is the Mubarak regime, as the broker of Zionism, to merit messages of good will being sent from here to Cairo? Did we not witness the ignorance and lack of merit of the lackeys of Israel for any good will and their ignorant attitude? How valuable are Mubarak and his regime, for the "honor of the ruling system" of Iran, to be sold out for the sake of getting close to them? We have been taught that "to try the already tried is wrong." The question is, how many times must we try the Egyptian Camp David regime — and just reach the same old conclusion — in order to become assured that showing further good will will get us precisely the same response?

Leave the Israeli bell-hops to themselves. Rest assured that the downfall of the Israeli mercenaries is not far off. The likes of "Khalid al-Istambuli" have their fingers on the trigger in order to free the beloved Egypt from the claws of Zionism, and are holding their breath for the promised moment. Do not delay any further the moment of liberation of the beloved Egypt and the heroic return of the great and honorable Egyptian nation to the fold of the world of Islam by showing so much good will which smacks of naivety and misunderstanding. Do not force Muslim revolutionaries to despair and suffer frustration. Rest assured that our foreign policy will be successful when it preserves the honor of the ruling system, the greatness of the revolutions, and the unforgettable aspirations of the nation throughout the revolution era, and when it makes decisions and acts within that framework.

Iran: Daily Welcomes France's Middle East Policy

LD1207130996 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 10 Jul 96 p 2

[Editorial article: "Chirac's Policy is Welcomed as a Positive Move, With Certain Notes"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] French President Jacques Chirac capped a visit to the Persian Gulf on Monday [8 July] with a renewed pledge to support the Middle East peace process on the basis of land for peace.

During his visit to Saudi Arabia and Qatar, the Gaullist leader reiterated that France would strongly defend just causes 'across the world' particularly in the Middle East through French influence.

While talking about 'across the world' Chirac makes a bracket for the Middle East because of the explosive situation in this sensitive part of the globe brought on by expansionist Zionist plots coupled with President Bill Clinton's incompetent foreign policy.

Chirac's policy is welcomed as a positive and constructive move. But analysts believe that Chirac needs a broader panorama before he launches the long-awaited role of his country in world affairs, particularly in the Middle East.

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Since May 1995, when he entered the Elysee Palace, Chirac has attracted the attention of the people worldwide, especially in the Middle East. His intentions are clear and are based on Gaullists' domestic policies as well as on their past record on Third World issues. What the French leader needs is to carry a clean slate regarding disputes between various countries.

This clean slate is a prerequisite for a definite accomplishment while the French leader is on a mission to defend the cause of the Third World and at the same time serve the long-term interests of his own nation.

This is the best time to bring to the attention of the French leader, who just completed his two-nation tour of the Persian Gulf, a few vital points.

Since the culmination of the Islamic Revolution, Iran was made a target of various plots by the oppressive powers in order to advance their own ill-designed ulterior interests.

The same oppressive powers created an anti-Iranian phobia among the smaller states in the Middle East in order to sell them weapons and rob them of their petrodollars. The same powers alleged, without providing any evidence, that Iran was involved in many plots against other sovereign nations, and that it is opposed to peace.

Contrary to earlier claims by the United States, the May 29 Israeli elections clearly proved that Israel, and not the Islamic Republic of Iran, is against peace.

Even before the Israeli elections, Lebanese civilians were made a target for Zionist air, land and sea raids in April. The savage Zionists bombed even a U.N. refugee camp massacring over 100 Muslim men, women and children.

Iran adheres to genuine Islam which prohibits exploitation of others and has been the driving force in cutting off the hands of oppressors from this land. These powers, who lost their influence and material benefits in Iran, through their own media present a simplistic picture of Islam that evokes fear and makes it nearly impossible to become familiar with the positive aspects of the Islamic system.

Iran was, and remains, ready to advance any assistance to promote peace with the sole condition that peace be genuine and fair and address the grievances of all concerned parties.

In the light of the above-mentioned facts, President Chirac should note that Iran can make great contributions towards achieving stability and a fair and durable peace in the Middle East.

Iran: Velayati Stresses Support for Syria

LD1507204396 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 11 Jul 96 pp 1,13

[Report: "Iran Did Not Call for Resumption of Ties With Egypt"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati yesterday said Cairo has put preconditions for normalization of ties with Tehran, while Iran had not even called for improving its relations with that country.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with IRAN NEWS, Velayati added: "What is important for us in the relation, is our respect for Syria's efforts to forge closer cooperation among Islamic states in their campaign against the hegemonic schemes of the Zionist regime."

Velayati further stated: "We appreciate the efforts of Syria and know that Damascus has made great efforts to this end. We believe that Syria should not be left alone under these conditions. Iran has always been on Syria's side from the very outset after the Islamic revolution and will continue to stand by the people and government of Syria, particularly in their quest to liberate their occupied lands."

Iran: Daily Welcomes Syria's 'Shuttle Diplomacy' for Bahrain

NC1307080096 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 4 Jul 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Iran's Interference in Bahrain, an American Fairy Tale"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' has launched a shuttle diplomacy to help remove misunderstandings between Iran and Bahrain.

The reason we need mediation is that Bahrain believes we are interfering in its internal affairs, while we have said several times that we are not.

One reason we are not interfering in Bahrain's internal affairs is that we are dependent on oil which we export through the Persian Gulf. We need security in the region for the smooth transportation of oil which is the lifeblood of Iranian industry. Any upheaval in its littoral states would disturb the security of the Persian Gulf.

Insecurity in the Persian Gulf is a serious threat both to Iran and its neighbors. The strategy we have adopted to maintain the security of the region differs from that of our friends.

The U.S. and the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf have realized that security in the region is a matter of life and death for regional states.

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The West, in general, and the U.S., in particular, have tried to project an imaginary threat in the region in order to sell arms. Earlier it was communism; today it is Iran.

Unfortunately, lacking popular support at home, some of the regional countries have bought the theory which is aimed at scaring the regional countries, forcing them to buy arms in order to safeguard the smooth transportation of oil to industrialized countries.

Iran believes that regional security can be maintained through cooperation among the regional countries without interference of alien forces.

This is why the U.S., the main foreign power with a massive presence in the Persian Gulf, spares no effort in portraying Iran as a threat to the region.

We welcome Syria's shuttle diplomacy because it is aimed at removing the misunderstandings between Tehran and Manama. But our Arab brothers should accept the basic fact that Iran is a reliable friend for all Muslim countries, especially its neighbors, given the fact that the Muslim world has a common enemy with a declared strategy to expand from the Nile to the Euphrates.

Iran: Commentary on Damascus Declaration Meeting in Muscat

LD1507152096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 15 Jul 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] While the hostile policies of the Zionist regime now threaten the general interest and the security of the regional countries, Arabs are still [word indistinct] their imagination. The foreign ministers of the member countries of the Damascus Declaration talked about the United Arab Emirates misunderstandings about the three Iranian islands in the meeting of Muscat.

The recurrence of such false actions only indicates this fact that the Arabic governments cannot distinguish between their friends and foes. The current status of the region demands the [?country] members of the Damascus Declaration to call on the Arab Emirates to continue its bilateral talks with Iran to clear the misunderstandings in the relations of the two parties, instead of intensifying them.

Eighteen years have passed since the victory of the Islamic revolution and the Islamic system in Iran has proved in this period that, without any greed for land or riches of the neighboring countries, it only thinks of the tranquillity and security of the region. The strict and long-lasting opposition of Iran with the existence of the Zionist regime and Iran's firm stand against the expansionist policies of this regime — while many of the Arab countries are on friendly terms with them — clearly shows this fact.

Being aware of the ominous intentions of the foreign powers that want the region to be unsafe and turbulent in order to promote their goals, Iran has always called on the neighboring countries to establish peace and tranquillity, and to deepen the friendly ties. However, it is obvious that the endeavors of Iran alone do not suffice and a unified Middle East only turns into a reality when all the regional countries perceive the need for unification. They should focus on the real needs of the region instead of insisting on a series of imaginations and baseless beliefs. Isn't now the time for unification and understanding of the regional Muslim countries — while the expansionist Zionist regime and the new rebellious acts of the radical Zionist cabinet have made fun of the goals of the oppressed Muslim Palestinians?

Iran: Daily Criticizes German Court Over Kurd Murder Trial

LD1207133796 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 10 Jul 96 p 2

[Editorial: "The Request of the German Prosecutor in the Mykonos Case is Illogical"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The trial of five men accused of assassinating Iran's Kurdish opponents is once more in the news. Recent reports alleged that two Iranian nationals were witnesses in the assassination of four Kurds in Berlin in 1992 and will appear in a special court in the German Embassy in Tehran.

The news was aired at the time when the concerned court is about to issue its final verdict in the case. The court maintained that the two Iranian nationals will be investigated as witnesses to the assassination.

Unfortunately, the German court in this particular case is not behaving as an independent court and is conducting the proceedings heavily influenced by political motives.

The German court clearly knows that the Iranian Judiciary is quite independent as the hearings in the case of the two Iranian nationals could very well be carried out within Iran's legal framework.

Anyway, Iranian authorities should not permit German prosecutor to conduct his investigation of the two Iranian witnesses at the German Embassy in Tehran. The German prosecutor wants to interrogate the two Iranians on behalf of the principal accused, Kasem Darabi, who is alleged to have organized the assassination of the three Kurds and an interpreter in the Mykonos Greek restaurant in September 1992.

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Observers, however are concerned over the issue and believe the case should have been tackled by the Iranian Judiciary. The conduct hearings in the German Embassy in Tehran is contrary to international law, they maintain.

A late report says that Iran's Foreign Ministry has opposed the request made by the German court and opined that such proceedings should be conducted through the Iranian Judiciary.

We know that the Iranian Foreign Ministry and the Judiciary are aware of the basic rights of our nationals as witnessed recently in the case of Turkish air raids which resulted in loss of innocent Iranian lives. The Foreign Ministry dealt with that case most appropriately.

In short we expect the German court to proceed according to the legal framework of the Islamic republic.

Iran: Ayatollah Discusses Military Maneuvers in Qom Prayers

LD1307193096 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1350 GMT 13 Jul 96

[Friday prayers second sermon by Ayatollah 'Ali Akbar Meshkini, speaker of the Assembly of Experts and secretary-general of the Qom Theological Lecturer's Association in Qom on 12 July — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The [Islamic Revolution] Guards Corps staged a maneuver last Wednesday [10 July]. It was a maneuver with more than 30,000 esteemed Guards Corps members taking part in combat training and such things. This is what is meant by maneuver.

One wonders what all these maneuvers are about because we also had the great "Velayat" maneuvers recently [24-27 May]. I really do appreciate these maneuvers and am grateful for them. This is because the noble Koran instructs us thus. [passage omitted] Oh Muslims! Oh followers of the Koran! There are two things that are very important in the face of the enemy: Be prepared; be in a state of preparedness both in terms of your combat equipment and your mobility. These are the two things that count in war: First, weapons and the tools for fighting; second, transport and relocation on land, sea, and air. [passage omitted]. Maneuver means preparing for this task.

Can't you see that your enemies — especially that great Satan, the great world terrorist — are staging maneuvers every day under your nose. One day they say that America is staging a week-long joint maneuver with Kuwait in such and such a place and another maneuver elsewhere and yet another in another place. Why has America come from the other side of the world to stage maneuvers here? It wants to say: Iran, I am here; I have dollars; I have weapons. Well, Iran on its part, has God and religion; and I swear by God, that God and religion take precedence over weapons.

This is the meaning of these maneuvers and they should have a response. You are responding to them. You should express your appreciation, thanks and praise. I thank the esteemed Guards Corps members, each and every one of them. I wish I could be allowed to go there and brush the dust off the places they are going to sit on. I wish I could do this with my eyelashes rather than with a broom. This is God's army. If, in today's world, you want to say that there is a spiritual and a God's army somewhere, you would not find it anywhere except in these combatants. [Crowd chants: God is Great! Khamene'i is the leader! Death to America! Death to Israel!].

May God bring you success; may God accept your prayers, your slogans, your curses on unbelievers. They come and stage maneuvers every day. It is therefore necessary to react to this. I hope, God willing, that you will be successful. [passage omitted]

Iran: Mobilization of 3,700,000 Basijis Reported

LD1507164196 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 11 Jul 96 p 9

[Article by the provincial service: "Three Million Seven Hundred Thousand Basijis Have Been Mobilized"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The commander of the Basij Resistance Forces has said: 3,700,000 basijis have been attached to battalions and companies.

Speaking in Arak, Brig-Gen [Alireza] Afshar added: Of that number, 350,000 have been attached to the 841 Ashura (men's) battalions and Al-Zahra (women's) battalions. He said: At present 2.2 million school pupils are assigned to construction, relief, and cultural groups as advance and reconnaissance personnel for pupils' basij [basij-e daneshamuzi].

Also, so far, 12,000 local reserve companies with 150,000 members have been formed in various parts of the country. According to plans, by the end of this year, 100,000 new personnel will join the basij.

Iran: Report on Petrochemical Exports

LD1407193596 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 14 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Over $400 million worth of petrochemical products were exported last year [last Iranian year ended on 19 March 1996], and it is foreseen that this figure will reach $500 million by the end

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of 1375 [current year ending 20 March 1997]. Our correspondent, Pishbahar, has prepared a report:

[Begin recording] [Pishbahar] The Islamic Republic of Iran is currently exporting over $1 million worth of petrochemical products per day to countries in the Middle East, Central Asia, Africa, and Europe. It is foreseen that, by the end of the second [five-year] development plan, the level of petrochemical exports will exceed $1.3 billion.

Currently, with the investment of $3.3 billion, which is being made by the public and private sector for the construction of new units and complexes, it is foreseen that the country's capacity for producing petrochemical products will increase from the current 10.5 million tonnes per year to 14.7 million tonnes in the year 2000.

[Head of Iran's national petrochemical company] Our plan is to produce 10 million tonnes of petrochemical products this year. This compares with less than 1 million tonnes after the end of the [Iran-Iraq] war — and, even under the previous regime, when it was around 2 million tonnes. There has been a huge leap. It is not just a question of volume either, because our products under the previous regime or our limited production during the war were generally products of little value. Our products today are very valuable and complex. We have set our guidelines in the second [five-year] plan for exports. We have made plans for six major projects under the plan.

[Pishbahar] During the first three and a half months of the current year, 618,000 tonnes petrochemical products, with a value of 460 billion rials, have been sold inside the country. This figure represents a 27 percent increase over the same period last year. [end recording]

Iran: Paper Objects To Palestinian Minister Attending OIC Session

LD1307172196 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 9 Jul 96 p2

[Unattributed commentary: "Palestinian or Israeli Representative?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The session of communications ministers representing the Organization of the Islamic Conference [OIC] member states began in Tehran yesterday with the participation of 52 Islamic countries. A significant point which is a cause for concern is the presence in the session of Imad al-Faluji, the post and telecommunications minister of the so-called self-rule government of [Yasir] 'Arafat.

In view of the past record of Yasir 'Arafat's gang in recent years, in particular its establishment of close ties with Israel, the participation of al-Faluji in the Tehran session must in fact be seen as the presence of Israel here.

At first, it was believed that the Foreign Ministry had not been informed about the matter and had in fact been faced with a fait accompli. However, the surprising remarks by the ministry's spokesman revealed that the Foreign Ministry had in fact approved the unwise decision to extend an invitation to the representative of Israel to attend the Islamic world's communications session. The spokesman, furthermore, gave us the good news that Arafat too is on his way to Tehran, and the Islamic Iran, as the host of an OIC summit, will soon offer hospitality to the traitor 'Arafat!

Perhaps it is not necessary to explain the Zionist nature of 'Arafat's government to the Foreign Ministry. This is because they are fully aware that the whole structure and function of 'Arafat's faction has in recent years been brought in line with the objectives of the Zionists. 'Arafat's circle has now been transformed into an entity which is totally alien from the Islamic world, or to put it differently, an entity which has become like a fish bone stuck in the windpipe of the Islamic world and the Palestinian movement.

It is surprising that the Foreign Ministry is so careless about the most fundamental and essential bases of the foreign policy of the system of the Islamic Republic and that it engages in a naive analysis of such important issues as inviting a representative from Israel to a conference of communication ministers in Tehran.

This matter, especially after the coming to power of Netanyahu and the war-mongering Likud faction, can be seen as a clear green light to the Zionists and will, undoubtedly, be interpreted — in the world of Islam, by Muslim nations and, especially, by proud Palestinian Muslims — as a retreat by us from our principles and an endorsement of the treacheries committed by the compromising faction of 'Arafat. This is at a time when the strategy of the Islamic Republic's system is and always will be based on the rejection of any kind of compromise with the Zionist occupiers.

Of course, the spokesman of the Foreign Ministry has pretended, with particular cleverness, that Islamic Iran, as the host of the conference of post and telecommunications ministers from the member countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, was duty-bound and obliged to extend an invitation to Imad al-Faluji as well, whereas, in diplomatic practice, not inviting some countries, for political reasons, is entirely acceptable and occurs frequently, and this unsatisfactory justification can never serve as a cover for inviting an Israeli representative to attend a communications conference of the world of Islam in Tehran. In addition to this, bearing in

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mind that the system of the Islamic Republic does not officially recognize 'Arafat's so-called self-rule government, what is the meaning of inviting a minister of that government?

Foreign Ministry officials are totally aware that, in view of its importance and strategic position, Islamic Iran has been and will continue to be the venue for numerous international meetings. This cannot, however, serve as a reason for also inviting an Israeli official to Iran. Of course, it may be said that, from the Foreign Ministry's point of view, there are differences between 'Arafat's administration and Israel. If the Foreign Ministry makes such a claim, appropriate replies will certainly be given. However, our hope and expectation regarding the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic is that it will not enter into the political games played in today's world and that it will not resort to unreasonable arguments — which would allow the justification of everything and anything, including the establishment of relations with Egypt's Camp David regime and even Israel!

Iran: Daily Sees Need for Information Revolution in OIC States

LD1207132696 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 10 Jul 96 p 2

[Editorial: "OIC States Need Information Revolution"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran hosts the third meeting of the telecommunications ministers of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) who have been here discussing avenues for better utilization of existing telecommunications facilities of OIC members and finding out problems in the way of a dynamic cooperation.

Our world today has predominantly economic characteristics. Emergence of regional economic blocs is one of the salient features of the post-Cold War era. As a result, there is intense economic competition among existing economic blocs and there will be fierce economic competition among emerging economic powers.

Having numerous factors in common, the OIC countries can form an economic bloc to take care of their own interests.

Information has the final say in this competition. Communications play a crucial role in the dissemination of prompt and accurate information among OIC members.

The 52 member states of the OIC have less than 40 million telephone lines at their disposal, while Germany alone has nearly 50 million telephone lines, let along the U.S. with about 150 million lines in service.

To get closer to each other, the OIC member states should boost their communications systems, setting up regional and Islamic data networks, as well as joint ventures in this field, be it training, sharing experiences or exchange of specialists.

Iran: Nateq-Nuri Meets With Islamic Coalition Members

LD1307194196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 13 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At a meeting this afternoon with the members of the Central Council of the Association of Islamic Coalition [jam'iyat-e mo'talefeh-ye eslami], Mr. ['Ali Akbar] Nateq-Nuri spoke of the important and notable role played by this association in shaping the Islamic movement and uprising in the country, and stressed: The revolution owes a great deal to the Association of Islamic Coalition.

Nateq-Nuri described the spirit of devoutness as one of the key factors behind the success of the Association of Islamic Coalition during the revolution and stressed: Adhering to this principle kept the association healthy and immune. The Majles speaker also spoke of the need to expand Islamic associations in terms of quality and quantity, and added: Expanding activities by preserving values, adopting broad-mindedness, paying attention to the younger generation and making the youth branch more active, by relying on their own particular culture, are among the most important things this association must bear in mind.

Iran: Nateq-Nuri Tells Majles Islamic Republic 'Source of Hope'

LD1407131096 Tehran IRNA in English 1108 GMT 14 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 14, IRNA — Majles Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri said here Sunday [14 July] that the Islamic Republic of Iran is both a source of hope for world Muslims and a response to the idle talkings of those who claim religion cannot rule a country. Speaking at the open session of the Majles, he referred to Iran as the focal point of the world of Islam and a center where Islam has revived.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Nateq-Nuri said that the resistance shown by Muslims in southern Lebanon to the Zionists and the movements of Muslims in Egypt, Algeria and the U.S. all stem from a lesson they have learned from Islamic Iran. Nateq-Nuri said the enemies of Islam and the U.S. are concerned that Islamic Iran has turned into a center for Islamic thought and genuine Islam.

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Iran: Daily on Responsibilities of Majles Deputies

NC1307081096 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 3 Jul 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Crucial Task for MPs"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The legislature in any country shoulders a heavy task. A nation sends its representatives to Parliament so that the deputies will find solutions to the people's problems and pass laws to further the country's interests.

The above fact is also true of the Iranian nation and Fifth Majles deputies. A significant majority of the Iranian people eligible to vote in the parliamentary elections turned out at the polls and voted for their favorite candidates. They did so with utter devotion and sincerity.

Now the ball is in the court of the deputies. As the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, addressing the Fifth Majles deputies stated, the MPs should by no means waste their precious time and opportunity, which has been vested in them by the people to be spent on proper decision-making.

Furthermore, the Leader advised the deputies to share their expertise and experience with the Parliament's committees so that the legislation will come out more mature and effective.

What the Iranian people are presently suffering from most is inflation. With free rein given to wholesalers and retailers and no measures taken to check soaring prices, the cost of living is sky-rocketing, inflicting heavy economic pressure on the average and low income strata.

Making the case even worse, the income tax is not fairly collected. In other words, the tax collection system needs a complete overhaul.

The government employees and others with fixed wages and salaries pay their due taxes even before they spend their earnings, according to the pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) method of collecting taxes. However, the same strict control regarding tax collection is not exercised over the marketplace.

Either by manipulating their accounts or by raising a great hue and cry, some traders evade income tax. Thus, by raising the prices of commodities, on the one hand, and not observing the moral and national duty of paying their debt to their country, on the other, they are getting wealthier day by day.

Based on the information recently released by the Ministry of Commerce, the poverty line for Tehran residents has been figured out at 680,000 rials, for those living in other cities at 450,000 rials and for the villagers at 370,000 rials.

Considering the average income of most government employees, which is far less than 500,000 rials, even in some cases less than half of the above figure, the majority of the Iranian people live below the poverty line.

In other words, a substantial portion of the population earns less than the minimum needed to buy the basic necessities of life. To be more explicit, the majority of Iranian people are classified as poor according to government standards.

The above fact highlights the crucial task and heavy responsibility of the people's representatives in the Parliament. As the Leader pointed out, the executive should be provided with effective laws so that it will be able to take strong measures to ease the conditions of grinding poverty.

The Fifth Majles deputies must bear in mind that the Iranian people are pinning their hopes on them. Thus, it is their religious, moral and national duty to try their utmost to resolve the economic problems and raise the people's standard of living.

Iran: Editorial Sees New Hezbollah Group in Majlis as 'Good Omen'

LD1407194396 Tehran ASR-E MA in Persian 10 Jul 96 p 1,7

[Editorial: "Formation of the Hezbollah Faction in the Majles"]

[FBIS Translated Text] With the formation of the "Hezbollah Assembly" [Persian: Majma'-e Hezbollah], the grouping of factions inside the Majles has entered a new stage. The formation of this assembly by the minority factions in the Majles indicates that these factions were strongly motivated by the urge to have a more effective and united presence in arenas that call for uniting and confronting the monopolistic methods of one particular faction.

We consider the formation of the Hezbollah Assembly as a good omen, specially under circumstances when the "traditional right-wing" faction has consolidated its forces and is seeking to monopolize power. Furthermore, we feel that the formation of this assembly is a timely response to a need we noted in a lead article headlined "The Necessity for an Anti-Monopoly Faction" in our last issue [6th Tir 1335/1 July 1996].

The formation of the "Hezbollah Assembly" is also another reason for the qualitative differences between the fifth Majles and the fourth and shows that the

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method adopted by the Coalition of the Line of the Imam groups under the name of "the fight against monopoly" was a sound one. In spite of the fact that this method did not bring about a significant quantitative change in the composition of the Majles — because of the blatant offenses committed by the monopolists [Persian: enhesar-talaban] — it did, nevertheless, lead to a qualitative change that totally destroyed the dream of domination over the Majles by one faction. Now, the "Hezbollah Assembly" faction, which is composed of approximately 100 deputies, will be able to turn the Majles into a true platform for the exchange of opinions and standpoints which enjoy substantial backing and credibility in society.

Just as we said, by stressing the common stances of the factions that have come together to form the "Hezbollah Assembly," this assembly could play an active and effective role in debating and passing Majles bills. It seems that the "Hezbollah Assembly" would be able to give priority to the proposed amendments to bills such as the press and election laws — especially the question of vetting — and also to find solutions to that set of economic and social problems in society that are viewed from the same standpoints.

But the faction representing the Line of the Imam should not only be actively present in the Hezbollah Assembly but should strive to realize its specific viewpoints and stances, especially with regard to economic issues and bills related to social justice. In this connection, close and firm contact with the "Coalition of the Line of the Imam" groups would provide effective and decisive political backing to the Hezbollah Assembly faction.

Another point is that the effective activities of the minority factions in the Majles could get rid of the feeling of despondency brought about by the irresponsible and illegal behavior of the monopolists during the elections, and instead, could give the people the good tidings that if they were to participate more actively in the mid-term elections, they might succeed in filling the remainder of the Majles seats with their own chosen deputies. This in itself could shape the fundamental framework for the activities and political struggles of the Coalition of the Line of the Imam groups during the coming months and until the mid-term elections of the fifth Majles and even the presidential elections next year.

At the same time, the "coalition" groups should engage in acceptable political activities so as to keep alive this hope among those who voted in constituencies where the [elections] results were declared to be invalid and to warn people against the adverse consequences of indifference and lack of sensitivity toward the next mid-term elections.

Iran: Official on 'Islamization' of Universities

LD1407183996 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 8 Jul 96 pp 1, 2

["Exclusive" Interview: "All Organizations and Groups Must Unite To Make Universities Islamic"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Social desk: The Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution is the only legal organization and the only institution acceptable to all groups for the Islamization of universities.

Dr. Emami, deputy health minister for student, cultural, legal, and parliamentary affairs, made this announcement in an exclusive interview with our correspondent and he spoke of that ministry's programs for Islamizing the country's universities of medical sciences. Dr. Emami stressed that the Islamization of universities depended, for its implementation, on solidarity between all the groups, in universities, that believe in the the velayat-e faqih [guardianship of the supreme jurisconsult] and said: If the Muslim forces who follow the velayat-e faqih do not act with unity and each group wants to put their own interpretation on the remarks made by the eminent leader [Khamene'i], they will not choose the correct path.

Dr. Emami referred to the fact that, at the moment, the people in charge of the eminent leader's representative offices and various groups and organizations are striving to Islamize universities, and said: If these groups do not have the same ideas or if they act in parallel or, God forbid, act against each other, the process of Islamizing universities will not be carried out correctly and people who are opposed to the Islamization of universities will take advantage of this.

Dr. Emami stressed: In order to avoid any differences of taste or any factionalism in the Islamization of universities, an authority that has legal standing and is acceptable to all groups must be identified, so that it can oversee the Islamization of universities.

The deputy health minister for student affairs explained that, from our point of view, the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution is the main custodian in charge of Islamizing universities, and said: The supervision by this council of the Islamization of universities must not lead others to think that they have no responsibility in this task. These groups must, rather, concentrate all their efforts on Islamizing universities under the supervision of the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution.

Dr. Emami referred to the ministry's programs for Islamizing universities of medical sciences and said: In terms of the contents of the courses, there is no major debate because the contents of medical books

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are one hundred percent scientific and the necessary steps have been taken regarding this matter with the start of programs to bring medical affairs into line with the demands of the sharia and medical ethics, but this is not enough and more must be done in this area.

He added: Regarding issues not relating to the content matter and issues which have to do with the form or organization of courses, the question of the selection of academic staff, as pivotal elements in universities, is one of the serious subjects [to be addressed] and we are trying — by proposing a change in the selection criteria for academic staff, having it approved by the relevant authorities, and making strong recommendations to university managers that they should use university graduates who are committed and specialist people — to carry out the guidance of the eminent leader.

Personal confrontations with academic staff

In reply to the question, what is your opinion about the personal confrontation of some groups with members of academic staff at universities, Dr. Emami said: We have approved criteria for filling managerial posts and selecting lecturers at universities, and the problems of lecturers must be examined on the basis of these legal criteria. On the other hand, the guidance given by the eminent imam [Khomeyni] and the eminent leader about political activity by university students demands that universities should be political. However, there may be differences of opinion about how universities should be politicized. He added: It may be that university managers think that politicizing universities will set students against managers. However, in our opinion, those universities have been more successful which have allowed students to have the necessary scope and at which students, for their part, have cooperated with university management when required.

Dr. Emami stressed that one of the main problems with political activity at universities was the number of organizations, and disputes between these organizations has meant that students are not very keen to take part in political activity. He said: Legally, these organizations have to obtain permits from the three-member delegation [as published]. Our recommendation to them is that they should obtain permits and act within the framework of the charter. They should not think that obtaining a permit is tantamount to having their activities curtailed. We value the opinion of organizations and students, and we examine any criticism they may have about anything.

Dr. Emami stressed: The remarks made by the eminent leader about Islamizing universities were perfectly clear and they were no different from previous statements. He said: Universities are not Islamic and they must be made Islamic, and he asked that committed and specialist lecturers be used. He also stated that there were lecturers in universities now who have no enmity against the system. We have nothing against these lecturers and they can continue teaching their courses and doing their work.

Our expectation is that students in universities will pay attention to the remarks of the eminent leader and act on everything he said. They should not, God forbid, do anything to make it [Islamization of universities] deviate from its true path. He stressed: If a lecturer demonstrates enmity against the system and stands against the system, it is the responsibility of the management to confront such forces, and students, for their part must act according to the law, so that, with the cooperation of all those who follow the velayat [religious guardianship], this sacred movement will not deviate from its true course and so that some people will not be allowed to abuse his remarks.

He added: We have held consultations about this at the ministry so that, through coordination with the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution and the office of the eminent leader, we can draw up criteria and regulations for reforming the structure of universities and submit them to the relevant authorities.

Sending students abroad

He said the following about sending students abroad following the remarks made by the eminent leader: Already, from about two and a half years ago, we had reviewed regulations relating to grants and imposed many limitations regarding sending students abroad. We stopped sending students abroad on grants for bachelors degrees or masters degrees. We only sent students abroad on grants for PhD or doctorates degrees that were not taught in the country and specialist courses. We still intend to review the issue of grants [for students going abroad] again and reduce problematic cases to the minimum.

Pay increase for interns

In conclusion, Dr. Emami said the following about a pay increase for interns: During the current year [current Iranian year began on 20 March 1996], interns' pay has gone up by 50 percent and it will go up by 50 percent again at the beginning of next year.

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Iran: Reporters on Press Observance Seminar

96LA0278A Tehran SALAM in Persian 25, 28 Apr 96

[Articles by Akram Didari and Elham Hoseynzadeh]

[25 Apr 96, p 5]

[FBIS Translated Text] **The First and Second Festivals at a Glance**

[Boxed item] The First Press Festival began its work in the Vahdat Hall from 13-21 Ordibehesht 1373 [2-10 April 1994]. In the first festival, 3,000 items from more than 1,000 journalists reached the festival office; these were evaluated by 16 committees. In addition, there was the following:

Displayed in Vahdat Hall were 112 journals from throughout the country. Alongside the display, several exhibitions involving the press throughout history, sketches, photographs, and caricatures were also held. There were six judges, one of whom was a member of the press.

The results of the first festival with regard to newspapers were as follows: No newspaper qualified for the best and could not obtain a first rank.

KEYHAN and HAMSHAHRI ranked second, and ETTELA'AT was ranked third.

The Second Press Festival was held from 6-13 Ordibehesht 1374 [26 April-3 May 1995] at the permanent location of the Tehran International Exhibition. In the second festival, more than 7,000 items from 1,500 journalists and more than 400 publications of the country participated in the festival. The submissions were evaluated by 13 specialized committees.

Alongside the competition sector were other secondary programs, including numerous exhibitions that were active in connection with the press. There were seven judges, none of whom were working journalists. In this festival, the superior works of journalists were chosen and not superior journals. [end boxed item]

With the passage of more than a century and a half since the publication of the first newspaper in Iran, this gift from Europe has not yet found its place in our country, as it should, regardless of all the reasons given for this problem and all the initiatives for making it accepted by the people. We would like to discuss the Press Festival, the third of which will be held this year.

The Press Festival is held by the Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance concurrent with important connections in the history of the press in the world and in our country, the most important of which is World Press Day. Essentially, the creation of such festivals and every gathering that results in assembling journalist colleagues and where people can also become familiar first hand with some of the owners of the press and those who serve them is a positive step. There are also shortcomings, however, including the fact that despite all the speeches and reminders that were made in the previous two festivals, the Ministry of Guidance continues to be in charge of holding this festival, whereas in this connection, the journalists are more competent and deserving.

Moreover, for three years, still no definite criteria have been specified for the selection of the superior works. Hence, when evaluations are not based on clear and defined criteria, personal preferences can interfere in the selection process, and this, in addition to not providing us journalists with a specific model, causes despair and disappointment.

It is hoped that with the understanding of the weaknesses and attempts to eliminate them, the Press Festival will be able to rank one day among the world festivals.

On the occasion of the Third Press Festival, we visited several journalists and leaders of the press and asked their opinions in this connection.

Journalists' Evaluation of the Press Festival

Hoseyn Qandi, a leader of journalism and AKHBAR reporter, says about the Press Festival: Even though the Press Festival has many shortcomings, it is at least an opportunity to gather and hold meetings and discussions, and a number of people are commended for their work. Even though I think they have in fact intended to promote the viewpoint of journalists toward a particular direction, this cannot be done at all. In other words, we cannot be journalists who take dictation, and if this is done for this purpose, they will not succeed in having everyone have a particular viewpoint. But if it is to practice a sort of democracy in which journalists are able to tolerate each others' ideas and opinions, not only it is not bad, it is very beneficial.

In continuation, he says: Of course, in my opinion, they must reduce the propaganda aspects and improve the quality. In other words, festivals must be a place for the best selections, so that young journalists can come, see the models, and be encouraged.

Mohammad Mehdi Forqani, a teacher of journalism and the editor of KEYHAN's Report Service, points out that such ceremonies can help the growth of journalism as a profession and says:

Several points must be taken into consideration. First, essentially, the government cannot be a good custodian of this type of festival, because the government always

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imposes its own interests and particular restrictions in the selections and evaluations. Hence, the danger always exists that if these selections are not based on scientific and accepted professional principles, they would provide a false model for the society, and the press community, at the same time, would feel a sort of discrimination, which in itself will not only not encourage and empower the journalists and their growth and success, but rather can have unfavorable consequences.

He continues: In the previous two festivals, because they were new, some of the problems may have been natural, but the problem is that the festival itself has not yet reached a clear definition of its goals and duties and has not yet found the necessary solutions for itself. For this reason, we have been and are witnessing fluctuations and changes in the activities. In my opinion, in the other festivals, more attention was paid to committees than to quality, and the selections could not provide a proper standard for the press community.

Mohammad Heydari, the editor in chief of GOZARESH monthly, states in connection with the Press Festival: Holding festivals is one of the leverages that can be effective in enriching the press, but I do not know why such a good action, for which a lot of money is spent, ultimately does not produce the product that it should. This festival has been held for three years, but does not have the effect that it should on society.

Continuing, he says:

I proposed that they not be the high custodians of this issue but allow the press people themselves to implement it. Have the courage for once to invite the various journalists and allow the journalists to argue and unload their hang-ups. Do not interfere, but allow this popular action to be done by the journalists themselves. If it is bad, it will all be blamed on the journalists, and if it is good, it will be the same.

Pointing out that an organization in charge of culture must have a cultural perspective, he continues: The first year, this issue may make some noise and some may criticize you, but a competent, cultured, and faithful human being is one who takes such risks and accepts the unpleasant side effects of leaving a cultural issue to those involved in that cultural issue.

Continuing, he says: In any case, the intention is good, but patriarchy and government rule are seen in a matter which concerns the press, whereas according to the Constitution and the press law, the press is regarded as an institution of the nation and is, in fact, the supervisory leverage of the people over the government.

Ebrahim Aminzadeh, the editor of the Social Services of IRAN newspaper, comparing the Press Festival with the Pulitzer Prize, says: The Pulitzer Prize reminds you of a journalist event by journalists for other journalists, but in this festival, the custodians of which are not journalists and do not know the problems of the journalists, as proven in the previous two festivals, if their commendation can satisfy anyone, it will only satisfy those who think very superficially and are satisfied with very simplistic things to make them happy.

'Abbas 'Abdi, a member of the Editorial Council of SALAM, says regarding the Press Festival: In my opinion, they have some extra money and in order to cover up their other actions, they start such programs to show, for example, that they respect the press. On the other hand, they ban publications, put pressure on the press, and give a handful of paper to anyone they want. No support is provided for the press. (Of course, this is what they deserve.) It is precisely like someone killing someone else and then organizing a memorial service for him. It is the same here. In other words, in order to keep their pressures on the press from becoming public, they hold press festivals.

Continuing, he adds: In fact, what does the press have to celebrate, especially when the Ministry of Guidance is its custodian? In my opinion, it is better to be called a mourning than a festival. For instance, when we talk to three people in person and realize that they want the press to disappear altogether, then how can they celebrate the press? In any case, they celebrate, and the press does not boycott it. There is a competition in which the same people participate, hoping to get a prize.

Hoseyn Nasiri, journalist and teacher of journalism, referring to the goals of the Press Festival, said: One of the goals of the Press Festival can be to introduce artistic journalists to the people, in which connection no steps have been taken so far, whereas in fields such as the cinema, theater, and music, people are sufficiently familiar with the artists in these fields.

Fariborz Bayat, the editor of the Social Service of HAMSHAHRI newspaper, expresses his evaluation of the Press Festival as follows: In my opinion, if the goal of the festival is to introduce the superior works of superior journalists and superior quality, it has not been very successful in this goal because the festival's outlook is nonspecialized. I think very good work of newspapers or particular individuals who have been ignored under the influence of the political climate have existed which have either not been seen or were put aside. Well, this problem negates the general idea of impartiality of the festival. Politically, it might present a good outlook to the society, but this does not necessarily

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mean raising the knowledge of journalism. In other words, I want to say that the goal of both festivals has been mostly political.

He continues: In the first festival, many of the journalists who were in disfavor became associated with the political position of their journals. In other words, because the officials and those involved in the affairs of the press had particular positions regarding those journals, ultimately, many of the people who worked on these journals were punished because of it, and when they later tried to solve this problem, they faced another problem. In fact, because individuals are introduced in conjunction with the names of their journals, again, they are punished for it and perhaps even worse.

He says: In the Second Press Festival as well, until the night before the results were announced, apparently other individuals were chosen and were even sent invitations. On the day the prizes were awarded, however, other people were given the prizes.

Minu Badi'i, journalist and teacher of journalism, refers to the positive role of holding the Press Festival and says: This festival and the publicity that is done calls the attention of the people and public opinion to the role and mission of the press, and people will come to believe that alongside the two powerful mass communication media of radio and television, there exists another mass medium called the press.

She continues: Merely holding a festival is not enough to recognize the place of the press though. In 1369 [21 March 1990-20 March 1991], we had the first seminar for examining the Iranian press, the likes of which must be held every year with regularity. If there was a guild organization, perhaps there would be an opportunity to hold such seminars every year, but since such an organization does not exist, the Press Festival can prepare the grounds for such seminars to examine the problems of the press scientifically and on the basis of research and make use of the experiences of the high-ranking professors of journalism in the country as well as communication researchers.

[28 Apr 96, p 6]

[FBIS Translated Text] **In the previous section of this report, on the occasion of the start of the Third Press Festival, we spoke to a number of journalists and asked their opinion regarding the Press Festival. In this section, we asked them about the manner of selection of the juries of the festival and also the characteristics of an ideal festival. We call to your attention these conversations.**

Opinions Regarding the Selection Procedures and Members of the Juries and Specialized Committees

Ebrahim Aminzadeh points out that the press before being governmental is a national and people's institution and says: If a festival is to be held, the press itself should do it, and if there is going to be any commendation of the press, it is the journalists themselves who know more about it than the government does and who must do it.

He continues: I dare say that those who hold the festival are not from the press, and if they are, their journalism background is shorter than that of one of our middle-aged journalists.

Referring to the problems of the journalists, he adds: Have those who are in charge of the festival had a news region? Have they ever gone after a report? Have they confronted protesters? Have they been abandoned without support? They have not had such experiences; therefore, they cannot understand the hard work of a reporter or journalist to be able to determine the nature of his work. They hold their hands over the fire and stand outside the ring.

Rostamian, the editor in chief of ATIYEH, states: In evaluating the items and the announcement of results, two extreme approaches may occur. An excessive approach is for us to expect the results of this festival or competition to be something that is acceptable to all members of the press community. Such a thing is not possible in any competition, especially since this competition is different from others, because the issue is culture and thought, and personal judgment and viewpoints of judges may interfere. The other extreme is that, for the same reason, we see them make any judgment they wish, in other words, if issues that are quite clear and with which the majority of the press are familiar are not observed, naturally, the festival may gradually lose public reception in the mid term and face a sort of indifference.

Continuing, he says: I think that if the members of the specialized groups and the judges are composed of the most active members of the press, they can handle the selection process better. At the present time, because they cover a great deal of ground, choosing and selection is very difficult. Another point is that the results that are announced in these festivals do not necessarily mean that these are the best. If in the area of selections, the necessary considerations are not made, they will gradually become the Achilles heel and the vulnerable spot of the festival, and enthusiasm for it will cool down gradually.

Boluri, the editor of Events of IRAN newspaper, says regarding the process of selection of the superior work

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of the journalists: If selections are left to the press people, the work will be done much more naturally and gain internal and external credibility. In my opinion, the festival this time has not provided an incentive for journalists. When I see that a work chosen by the judges has shortcomings in terms of journalism, I, as a journalist, lose my faith, and as a result, young people also lose their faith.

He continues: In my opinion, a judge must from the beginning of the year work on the items, evaluate them on the basis of true standards, and make a judgment in the course of the year, rather than ask for anyone who has an article or item to submit it. Well, some people will not. They may not like to present themselves. By doing so, selection will be more comprehensive.

Hoseyn Qandi refers to the fact that there are few journalists involved in the judging and says: We must see on what basis the judgments are made. If they are on the basis of technique, a journalist must give opinions. Moreover, the criteria for evaluation are not clear. For instance, what criterion is there for selecting an article?

Regarding the criteria for selection, he says: Because I mostly teach technique, I place much importance on it, since through technique much of what is not said and much of what may not seem pleasant but is acceptable by the society can be properly expressed. If our form is correct, the content will automatically be correct. If you pour a news item into a good form, the news becomes attractive.

Regarding the selection of the judges of the festival, 'Abbas 'Abdi says: The selection resembles selections in the departments, and in my opinion they are not qualified at all to give opinions in this regard, even if they choose well. In fact, by this process of selection, they are setting aside the audience of the press, who are the people, and saying that we are your (journalists') audience, write something that we like and we'll give you prizes. If a newspaper writes something that the judges like, then what is the use of publishing it for the people?

Continuing, he says: If the journalist had a guild, he would not allow them to give him a prize at all, and no one would participate, but at the present, the journalists have financial problems and decide to participate to get a few coins. For this reason, they write things for which the audience is not the people but the specialized committee.

In connection with not participating in the Press Festival, Asef says: Naturally when one's work is going to be judged somewhere, the first question concerns what the criteria are for selection. When I do not know on what basis my work is going to be judged, even if I participate, I do so on the basis of ignorance.

Regarding the members of the jury and specialized committees, he says: When in the press someone places himself where he declares that he is one section and has a claim against other newspapers, well, it is clear how this person will react when he becomes a member of the jury or a special committee. Or if someone who has been the instigator of impositions of a series of restrictions over others by the Supervisory Committee, naturally, he cannot be expected to be a good judge of a person who speaks about the job security of journalists or the freedom of the press in his newspaper.

Emphasizing that more thought must go to the composition of the final jurors, Mohammad Mehdi Forqani says: I see the selections by the specialized committees to be a little more reasonable, because more professionals are used in them, but if we want to raise the professional quality of our work, in management too, the quality forces of the press must be used and merely politicizing the festival must be avoided.

Fariborz Bayat also says: Now, in the specialized committees and the jury, there are people who used to insult journalism, and when they want to offend someone, they call him a "journalist." Hence, they cannot be expected to choose a journalistic work because they have a negative view of journalism.

An Ideal Festival From the Perspective of Journalists

Regarding the characteristics of a desirable press festival, Fariborz Bayat says: The ideal festival is one that is organized by the press itself. In other words, it should be based on the specialized standards that exist for this task and the goal should be superior quality. In my opinion, it is better to have a guild organization to do this and in fact organize a festival. If it is by government organizations, I find it unlikely to succeed.

Regarding one of the characteristics of a desirable festival, Rostamian says: They should use the pioneers and more professional people in the press who have good intentions in the organizing headquarters and not restrict themselves to using members of some of the high-circulation newspapers.

Referring to the criteria for selecting superior works of the journalists, Forqani says: The festival must announce its criteria and standards in order to be able to build the culture, both in terms of technique and content, in order for journalists to know what they should be after and not send their work with their eyes closed and wait for chances.

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Asef refers to the place of the critical journals in the selection of superior works in the Press Festival and says: It is not important what the majority thinks. It is important for the majority to be able to tolerate the minority. This can be the criterion for social compatibility. The place of minorities, which now they would like to refer to as other thinking, the left or modern right faction or whatever they are, must be determined in these competitions.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Leghari Addresses Defense College on National, Regional Security

BK1707010296 Islamabad Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Press Release in English 3 Jul 96

[Address by Pakistani President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari to the Annual Convocation of the National Defense College in Islamabad on 3 July—released by the Information Ministry's Directorate General of Films and Publications]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mr. Vice Chancellor; Excellencies; Commandant, National Defense College; Members of the Faculty; Recipients of Master's Degrees; Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen:

1. It gives me great pleasure to preside over the Convocation Ceremony of the National Defense College, and award Master's Degrees to the successful participants of National Defense Course and Armed Forces War Course. I am very happy to note that participants from Jordan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Netherlands, Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates and United States of America will also be graduating today. Their presence here is a manifestation of Pakistan's close and cordial relations with these countries. I am sure the Course has greatly benefited from their participation and I hope that these officers return home with pleasant memories of their stay in Pakistan. I wish them success in their new assignments.

2. As you are aware, the National Defense College is the premier institution of learning for the Civil and Military Officers in Pakistan. The two courses at the college are conducted to groom them for senior policy planning positions, with the specific objective of enriching their capabilities to address the issues of National Development and National Security.

3. The Courses provide an ideal combination of academic and applied approaches for a meaningful and in-depth study of Pakistan's overall National Security needs in the prevailing domestic and international environments. It is heartening to note that the College has so far trained over 1300 officers from friendly foreign countries.

4. The participants of the 1995 course have witnessed several important developments having a direct bearing on the well-being and security of our nation. In the domestic arena, it is a matter of satisfaction that, slowly but surely, democratic institutions are taking firm root in the country. The press remains free and the judiciary fiercely independent. The recent promulgation of the Legal Reforms Ordinance is a landmark event in the separation of the judiciary from the executive. The situation in Karachi and urban Sindh has transformed with the government's success in breaking the back of the terrorist organizations. The stage is now set to enter into meaningful dialogues for a political settlement. This period of 1995-96 also saw massive foreign private sector investment taking place in Pakistan, principally in the Energy field.

5. In a democratic dispensation such as ours, where there are many political parties each with its own agenda for national development, debate and disagreement are but natural. Indeed, they are the very ingredients of democracy and a testimony to full public participation in the political process. Regrettably, such exchanges become violent at times and cease to be issue-oriented, but we should not despair or lose patience. We must also remember that our polity stands polarized mainly in the 'power' game. Where issues confronting the nation are concerned there is a large measure of agreement. The national consensus on Kashmir, our Security and Defense Policy, our Nuclear Program, the major standards of our Economic Program, and the Social Action Program bears testimony to Pakistan's great political and social strength. Therefore if the political scenario at times appears disturbing, we are re-assured by the National consensus on such a broad front of our collective life.

6. Although Pakistan is endowed with great natural resources we do not seem to effectively harness them. Our population of 130 million which could be our great asset is increasingly becoming a burden because we have never seriously paid attention to this great human resource-base. Two thirds of our people continue to suffer in the darkness of illiteracy. Other social indicators are equally miserable. Our high rate of population growth, under the circumstances, continues to over-burden the social and economic sectors, even restraining growth. Our fertile land and abundant water resources continue to be degraded, wasted and under-utilized.

7. Despite fairly impressive GDP growth rates in the last 30 years — even during the current year we grew at over 6 percent — the state of our economy remains fragile. A sustained adverse political or economic event can undermine it.

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8. Basically our budgets have been out of control — from many directions. Expenditures regularly exceed budgetary allocations. Revenues fall short of targets. Saving schemes do not produce resources expected of them. Corporations lack financial discipline and do not control their spending causing default in debt payments to government. Provinces lack the will to impose taxes but have an unlimited appetite to spend. The utilization of foreign aid is slow. All these factors combine to cause excessive bank borrowing, which in turn causes higher inflation. The cumulative effect of this situation — year after year — can be disastrous.

9. Despite heavy taxation we fail to achieve deficit targets. Why? Because the tax effort gets swallowed by an inefficient, corrupt or leaking system. A system that requires the political leadership to impose additional taxation simply to offset its own "drag" is not worthy of keeping. It must be reviewed and changed.

10. The tax collection machinery needs a total overhaul. The structure of taxes must be changed to achieve at least unitary elasticity. Despite heavy additional taxation almost annually over the last decade the tax to GDP ratio has remained more or less static at around 13 percent. We require expansion in the tax bases, plugging of loopholes, better tax administration, lowering of statutory rates, documentation of the economy and other steps to modernize the tax system.

11. Our Monetary Policy is currently hostage to large budget deficits, inefficient and corrupt public sector banks and DFIs and vested interests determined to exploit the banking system to their advantage. Such conditions generate high rates of borrowing, lower recovery and increasing amounts of stuck-up loans. High levels of domestic credit fuels inflation, puts pressure on reserves and the exchange rate, reduces our competitiveness and weakens the balance of payments. If Pakistan is to achieve inflation control and balance of payments viability we will have to control government borrowings, reduce loan defaults, improve the administrative efficiency of banks and eliminate outside interference in the banking system.

12. But having said this, I must reiterate that our Economy has much inherent strength and resilience. Our agriculture sector is doing well and its potential is greater still. The manufacturing sector can move much faster. The consensus amongst the major political parties on the major strands of economic policy means that investors can look forward to consistent long term policies. These include the role of the private sector as a major engine of growth, privatization, incentives for foreign private sector investment, deregulation and greater freedom to market forces etc.

13. On the external front, we face several crucial challenges. The situation in Kashmir, the continuing turmoil in Afghanistan, and the Nuclear issue continue to pose challenges to our security and economic well-being.

14. For Pakistan, peace is an indispensable practical requirement and an irrevocable national objective. Our national policies and our relations with all countries in general and with our neighbors in particular, are motivated and guided exclusively by our desire and quest for peace — peace that is based on the recognized principles of sovereign equality, inter-state relations and conforms to the demands of justice and morality. For such a peace, we shall continue to work earnestly and sincerely.

15. Unfortunately, such a peace has remained an elusive goal. An intimidating display of power and hegemonic ambition have threatened our existence, compelling us to accord high priority to security, both in the formulation of our foreign policy and in our economic resource allocation. At a time when our population continues to be largely illiterate, poorly housed and unhealthy, our scarce resources are being consumed at an ever-increasing rate by our defense requirements. This contradiction is more thoroughly exposed now than ever before. Our dilemma, right from our inception as an independent state, has been how do we promote the well-being of our people without compromising our security needs? And, this is one of the problems I would like you, as students of national defense and strategy, to address with imagination and ingenuity.

16. Quite obviously, the defense of a country is not a detached phenomenon confined to the borders; not an isolated task to be performed exclusively by the armed forces. It has to be an integrated effort both by the people and the men in uniform, launched both at the borders and behind them. If we are to deter and repel aggression successfully, we must prevent national energies from being dissipated on non-productive pursuits and orchestrate all elements of our national power and talent to ensure national security and preserve our national interests. In unity alone, shall we remain invincible. The need for national unity has perhaps never been more pressing than at present.

17. The ongoing political tensions with India are fraught with dangers of escalation. This unfortunate situation is out of tune with the contemporary trends towards detente and cooperation which are sweeping the globe today. It is a sad commentary on the countries of the region and, indeed an indictment of the vision of their leaders and intellectuals. Confrontation and armed conflicts have never solved problems permanently. We

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must resolve not to repeat the mistakes of the past or the folly of yet another war, which will bring in its wake untold misery. Eliminating the chances of such a conflict is the real challenge to which the countries of the region must measure up with boldness and vision.

18. The Kashmir problem remains unsolved. The Kashmiri people's revolt against occupying forces and clamouring for rights pledged to them formally at bilateral and international fora and the use of brute force to quell it, has added a dimension of urgency for the peaceful solution of this problem. Indeed, the Kashmir problem has bedeviled relations between India and Pakistan since independence. Kashmir continues to be a disputed territory, and cannot be dismissed as a settled issue.

19. Kashmir is the key to the problems of South Asia. A resolution of the Kashmir problem is required to avoid the danger of a conflict. A solution of the Kashmir dispute will also enhance the prospects of conventional arms control and non-proliferation in South Asia. Pakistan is prepared to continue the bilateral dialogue with India on the Kashmir dispute and other differences between the two countries. All proposals submitted by the two sides should be discussed. The ill-advised holding of farcical elections has further aggravated the tension in the occupied state as the Indian government has deployed additional troops in an attempt to stifle the will of the people.

20. Like their brethren in Kashmir, the people of Afghanistan desire and deserve an end to the mayhem of death and destruction that being inflicted on them. However, unlike Kashmir, there is cause for optimism that Afghanistan will soon emerge from its long ordeal of internal repression and fighting. We do not wish to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and we certainly have no preference for any party in particular. We earnestly hope that an amicable situation is hammered out through negotiations — and not through use of force. And for this, whether in conjunction with UN or OIC [Organization of Islamic Conference] initiatives, we are always ready to help. We believe that a durable settlement of the Afghan problem will involve establishment of a broad-based government reflecting ethnic and demographic realities in Afghanistan with simultaneous induction of a neutral security force, demilitarization of Kabul and collection of heavy weapons.

21. Just as the people of Afghanistan need peace, we too need peace in Afghanistan. If we are to take advantage of the historic cultural links that we possess with the Central Asian Republics to establish broad-based, mutually beneficial ties. Pakistan is situated at the crossroads of multiple economic zones. We would like to act not only as the gate-way for commerce with the Central Asian Republics but also become their partners in trade and development.

22. Pakistan has offered to the Central Asian Republics access to transit route and the use of facilities at the seaport of Karachi and later Gwadar which would greatly enhance their contacts with the outside world and reduce the cost of their trade, benefiting the region in diverse areas of economic activity. The focus of our policy is to develop mutually beneficial political, cultural, economic and commercial links with Central Asia which were artificially interrupted.

23. In the Nuclear sphere the government has, through dialogue and discussions, managed to convince the United States that it is neither fair not feasible to ask Pakistan to roll-back its nuclear program; that it will not accept unilateral and one-sided restraints and obligations on its nuclear program. Pakistan has asserted that it will not sign the NPT [nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty] unilaterally; it can do so simultaneously with India. It will support international agreements for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT] and a halt in the production of weapon-useable fissile material that are equitable and non-discriminatory.

24. If it is a sincere desire of the world to ban all nuclear weapons then the CTBT should have no loopholes through which states with a proven nuclear capability can escape. Pakistan's signature and adherence to the CTBT would depend on our confidence that all nuclear weapons states and nuclear capable states would join the Treaty.

25. The passage of the Brown Amendment permitting the transfer of defense equipment purchased by Pakistan has set the stage for opening of a new chapter in US-Pakistan relations and the broadening of the relationship that both sides desire. It will also form the basis of a redefined relationship between a long-standing, moderate and democratic ally of the United States within the framework of the new geo-strategic realities of our world today.

26. Efforts to place our relations with the United States on an even keel have made good progress but issues will remain because on occasions in the pursuit of common goals — non-proliferation, elimination of weapons of mass destruction, the reduction of tension in South Asia, we have had many and may continue to have differing approaches. The pursuit of dialogue is necessary at every level and this we have successfully sought to maintain.

27. China has played a vital role in preserving peace and stability in South Asia for the past four decades. China is a tested and trusted friend. It has extended

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support to Pakistan in many ways and at critical times in our history. Cooperation with China in the defense and strategic fields has acquired even greater significance in the context of the virtual rupture of our defense relationship with the U.S. We look to China for our crucial needs to promote Pakistan's modernization, specially in view of the inequitable restrictions we face elsewhere.

28. China has now emerged as the world's most dynamic economy. It is destined to play a vital role not only in Asia but also on the global scene during the 21st century. According to certain estimates, China is likely to have the biggest economy in the world by the turn of the century. Imperatives of economic restructuring make it necessary for China to have a peaceful, stable and benign environment around its borders as well as at the regional and global levels.

29. China has assured us that its relations with India will not be at our expense and Sino-Pak relations will not be affected by the changes taking place in the world.

30. Despite its current difficulties, Russia remains a major power and will continue to play an important role in world affairs. It also wields considerable influence in our region. It is in our interest to develop our ties with this important country and to establish a relationship of trust and confidence. Only such a development will permit the untrammeled growth of our economic ties with Central Asia and the full use of our strategic location as the key transit country for trade between Central Asia, South Asia and the outside world.

31. There are many in Russia who are concerned that Russia's relations must not be seen through the prism of its ties with India. An even-handed approach has been advocated. The absence of any conflict of interest between Russia and Pakistan has been noted. Even the bogey of Islamic fundamentalism raised by our detractors can be set to rest given the moderate and liberal image of Islam that Pakistan has espoused.

32. A misperception appears to be developing that Pakistan and Iran have any competing interests vis-a-vis Afghanistan. Such a dangerous impression must be dispelled with the utmost vigor. There is an agreement at the highest level in the two countries that Afghanistan should not be allowed to affect the excellent relations between Pakistan and Iran.

33. As one of the world's largest contributor of peace-keeping forces to the United Nations, Pakistan has helped to preserve global stability and save precious human lives. Whether in Somalia, Bosnia, Cambodia, Eastern Slovenia, Haiti or Angola, our forces have earned respect and goodwill for their courage and competence. We have led the way in promoting a more active role for the United Nations in building peace and promoting universal development.

34. Pakistan being a leading country of the Muslim World has always played a front-line role in the matters relating to Muslim Ummah. In the Middle East Pakistan has been a strong supporter of the Arab cause, particularly the just struggle of the Palestinian people for an independent homeland and end of Israeli occupation of Arab territories including Jerusalem.

35. Pakistan has maintained multifaceted relations with Arab and Muslim countries of the Middle East and the Gulf. These relations cover economic trade, and technical and defence cooperation. Another aspect of our relationship is the presence, particularly in the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), of approximately 1.5 million Pakistanis, who are gainfully employed in these states, and are a source of valuable foreign exchange remittances to Pakistan.

36. Pakistan believes that the security of the Gulf is the sole concern of the states of the region. A peaceful and secure environment in the Gulf region contributes to Pakistan's own security. Within these parameters, Pakistan has been, and remains willing to assist Gulf countries on bilateral basis, in augmenting their security requirements.

37. During the 23rd Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) held at Conakry from 9-13 December 1995, Pakistan succeeded in the adoption of a resolution regarding the holding of an extraordinary session of the Islamic Summit Conference in Pakistan in March 1997 to coincide with the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the Independence of Pakistan.

38. The unanimous adoption of our resolution is a clear manifestation of the importance given by the Islamic World to Pakistan. It is also a fitting recognition of the relentless struggle Pakistan has waged individually and in concert with the Islamic Ummah to promote Islamic causes.

39. In response to our security imperatives, we also seek self-reliance and indigenisation in our economy in general and defense production, in particular. Import of high-tech equipment from abroad is not only a heavy drain on our economy, but it also subjects us to a high degree of uncertainty and is hostage to the vicissitudes of inter-state relations. We have learned that no nation can expect to be truly sovereign if it is totally dependent on others for import of arms and technology. However, we must plan our indigenisation effort with vision and follow it up with the resolve to stand on our own feet as early as possible. There is also the need to absorb

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modern technology, adapt it or innovate appropriate technology to suit our own environment. We must also strive earnestly to share the fruits of our endeavors with our friends and benefit from their experiences through joint ventures and cooperative initiatives.

40. To those of you who will be primarily responsible for formulation and execution of military and service strategies, let me say that we shall never be able to match our much bigger adversary in numbers and resources. Our salvation lies in superiority of operational concepts, training, morale and most important, an indomitable spirit.

41. In our services both civil and military we must ensure that we do not level down human capability. While encouraging the mediocre, we must not cram the gifted. Please remember, a life time of having to curb the expression of original thought often culminates in there being nothing left to express. We must also not encourage the nation that independent thinking is arrogance, or that it degrades loyalty. We must, and especially in our training institutions like the National Defense College, give free play to dexterity and intelligence in the completion of tasks. Herein lies the key to success. I am confident that your formulation of the National Strategy Paper, in which a composite analysis of the current socio-economic and security factors has been carried out, will reflect these cautions. I also hope the solutions proffered will demonstrate sagacity and pragmatism. The contents of the Paper will be read with interest by the policy planners at the government level. Hopefully, they will take a cue from the ideas which have been presented after extensive research and intensive debate in this forum.

42. The nation has given much to all of you; it also expects much back from you. I am confident that the trust the nation has reposed in you, will Insha Allah, be fully vindicated in times to come.

43. In conclusion, let me once again congratulate those of you who have successfully completed your Course today. You depart today with my best wishes for your future assignments and careers. You are now members of an exclusive civil-military fraternity and wherever you are, these ties must not only be preserved but further consolidated. I also wish good luck to the participants from the friendly countries. I hope you and your families carry pleasant memories of your stay in Pakistan.

44. Let me also thank the Commandant of the National Defense College, the Members of the Faculty and the Staff for today's very memorable Convocation and Inauguration Ceremonies. I wish you all well in your future professional endeavors.

45. May Allah Almighty bestow His blessing on us all. Pakistan Paindabad!

Pakistan: U.S. Comments on Kashmir Said 'Meaningless and Baseless'

96AS0029C Karachi TAKBEER in Urdu 23 May 96 p-5

[Editorial: "The Kashmir Problem and Robin Raphael's Latest Order"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Robin Raphael, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, said "there has been no change in U.S. policy on Kashmir and we have no objection to India's holding Lok Sabha elections there. The election will help improve the present situation. We think this is a welcome development. The United States is willing to play the role of an arbitrator in the Kashmir issue, but cannot force India and Pakistan to a negotiation table."

It does not matter how meaningful and appropriate these comments by the U.S. assistant secretary are; they are meaningless and baseless in Pakistani eyes. Robin Raphael claims no change in US policy on Kashmir has been made. The fact, however, is that U.S. policy on Kashmir has totally changed after the end of the cold war. It is sad there is no moral and legal basis for change in this policy except for the U.S. preference and protection of its own interests. In the past, the United States not only recognized the UN resolutions on Kashmir but also had been active in their support and had demanded India to follow up on these resolutions. Records prove that U.S. diplomats, military, and other officials used to visit the sub-continent as UN observers and facilitators to demand that we follow up on the UN decisions. The Kashmir problem has been unresolved for 48 years. During this time neither has a mountain in Kashmir moved nor a river disappeared. There have been no geographical changes. In addition, there is the truth that despite all kind of Indian efforts there has been no change in the Kashmiri people's attitude. What is the reason that the United States now does not considers Kashmir a disputed area? Had the United States considered Kashmir a disputed area, Robin Raphael would not have asked this question or taken the stand that there is no ground for objection to India holding the Lok Sabha election in Kashmir.

The reason to object to India's holding Lok Sabha election in Kashmir is that Kashmir is a disputed area from the international perspective and is still being considered as a case in the United Nations. Kashmir is not a part of India and it is India's unilateral decision to declare it an integral part of India. None of the partners involved in the Kashmir problem have

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recognized it. What is the ground for holding Lok Sabha elections there when Kashmir is not even a part of India? Holding election in an occupied area so that this area appears to be a part of India is in fact is a conspiracy, and a depraved act for this very purpose. There is no moral, legal, or principled reason for holding Lok Sabha elections In Kashmir. The only reasons for this election is to legitimatize India's forced occupation of Kashmir and to show that the UN decision to provide Kashmiris the right to self-government was outdated. The Lok Sabha election in occupied Kashmir is analogous to undermining Kashmiri people's self-respect and endorsement of India's forced occupation of Kashmir. That is why all members involved in the Kashmir issue, except for India, are opposing this election. Robin Raphael should tell us what logical reasoning and legal arguments are behind this decision and what logical and moral reason is behind the Lok Sabha election in Kashmir.

Robin Raphael says that this election will help improve the situation. How? For whom is this election being held there when the people of Kashmir do not recognize it? There is no room for free and honest elections in occupied Kashmir when 700,000 Indian soldiers are committing atrocities there. Six years ago, a similar election resulted in Kashmiris started a major campaign against India which India insists is supported by neighboring countries. The present unfair election might result in even more horrid actions. Nothing happens just by talking about something. Therefore, there is no support for Madam Raphael's claim that this election will help improve the situation. Is there any argument that supports her claim? Any reasoning? Any deduction? Any proof? Robin Raphael has to tell us how this election which is being rejected even before it is held will help improve the situation. Madam Raphael has said without any supporting argument and basis that this is a welcome development. It is not necessaryily true that everything that is welcome to the United States should be right, we cannot accept it without any proof nor should we be forced to accept it.

Madam Raphael has said that the United States is willing to play the role of an arbitrator in the Kashmir issue. The question is: How can it be an arbitrator when it does not consider Kashmir a disputed region at international level and does not consider the dispute over Kashmir to be legitimate? Only a crazy person will recognize a biased country to act as an arbitrator. If a nation under the US influence accepts US arbitration, the United States should know that the people here think of it as an unfair world power and will not consider it as a honest and sincere mediator.

Robin Raphael herself has identified U.S. inability to play the role of an arbitrator in one sentence. She said the United States is ready to act as a mediator in the Kashmir issue, but it cannot force India and Pakistan to start negotiations. The question is if a nation does not have moral influence to bring the two nations to the negotiation table and persuade them to start bilateral talks, how can it play the role of a mediator effectively? It would not be wrong to consider it totally unqualified for this purpose.

Pakistan: Draft CTBT Text Viewed as Unacceptable to South Asian Security

BK1707021096 Islamabad THE NATION in English 16 Jul 96 p 6

[Article by Naseem Zehra]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Delhi, there is clarity and firmness. In Islamabad, there are signs of confusion, if not nervousness. Together, Pakistan and India, the two threshold nuclear states, have made the authors of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) lose sleep. The June 28 deadline for signing the treaty has expired. Jaap Ramaker, the chairman of the negotiations, has given the 61 Conference on Disarmament (CD) delegates a new text to take back "to their capitals". The delegate's will return to Geneva on July 29. Ramaker hopes the CTBT, on which negotiations began in 1994, will be ready for signing at the UN in September. This seems unlikely, however, unless Indian concerns are met. If they are not, the treaty clause calling for ratification by five nuclear weapons states (NWS) and three nuclear threshold states as a precondition for enforcement of the treaty, must be altered.

As the 61 CD member states review the latest version of the CTBT text, many issues of concern remain. There is disagreement on the nature of evidence which can justify the initiation of inspection and on-site inspection itself. The nuclear have-nots are unhappy with the intrusive nature of verification being proposed. It puts too much control in the hands of the NWS, particularly the Europeans and-the Americans. On what many see as intrusive on sit inspection, the Chinese maintain that an "unequal treaty" which allows a few countries to be "self-proclaimed international policy" cannot be accepted. The Chinese complain that "one very advanced country" is attempting to use its own monitoring technology as a sole criterion to initiate on-site inspections under the treaty. Beijing fears "those national technical means could be misused".

On the issue of zero option testing, which bans all military and civilian nuclear tests, there is agreement. Most CD member states demanded that the laboratory

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and simulation techniques for nuclear testing should be banned. Otherwise these techniques would enable the technologically-advanced NWS to maintain and further develop their nuclear arsenals. After initial resistance, China seems to have finally accepted it. Only the Chinese have declared that they will conduct one more nuclear test before they opt for a self-imposed moratorium in September.

Meanwhile, in Washington, the Clinton administration's eagerness to have a ratified CTBT to its credit as Clinton vies for re-election has led to, some 'alternative' thinking. India's inflexible stance has also forced some sections of the American establishment to produce new options. Washington is reportedly offering a compromise formula making the treaty enforceable after an agreed period of five year, even if "threshold states" do not sign. However, the quid pro quo for this delayed enforcement of CTBT would be a tougher treaty monitoring plan than proposed in the earlier text.

Pushed to the wall by, India's firm stance on the CTBT, Washington appears inclined to revert back to its original realistic goal — that of a CTBT ratified by five nuclear states and a fixed number of unspecified others. In the original CTBT text, the Entry Into Force (EIF) clause (the question of which countries must ratify the treaty before it becomes law) specified that the treaty would enter into force only after eight states, the five NWS and three nuclear capable "threshold" states, ratified it. Russia, China and UK remain committed to not ratifying a CTBT which is not signed by India, Pakistan and Israel. Washington is also contemplating introducing the treaty in the General Assembly through a resolution sponsored by "a group of friends of the treaty". This would circumvent any hurdles to acutely getting the treaty to the 51st UN session and opening it for signature. The US representative to the CD, Stephen Ledogar, however, acknowledges that if certain "key countries" like Russia and China maintained that "they would not approve a resolution going through the back door, then forget about it".

Meanwhile, the Indians show no sign of wavering. The Indian position is totally and demonstrable supported across India, even bridging the country's multiple political divides. India's criticisms of the treaty are many. First, the CTBT does not contain a firm timetable for totally eliminating nuclear weapons. India calls for an approximately ten-year period for total elimination. Without it, according to India, this open-ended possession of nuclear weapons keeps the threat of a nuclear war hanging over the world. Second, the treaty is discriminatory, as it legitimises possession of nuclear weapons only by the five declared nuclear powers: US, UK, Russia, China and France. In Geneva, an Indian official argued that the CTBT only "seeks to deny technological refinements to some to continue such technological refinements in laboratories".

Third, the provision in the CTBT text which requires the three nuclear threshold states — India, Pakistan and Israel — to ratify the treaty before it can take effect is discriminatory, and puts unfair pressure on India. Indian officials maintain that Delhi will take no dictate on matters of national security and will decide the matter according to its "supreme national interest".

Indians are not spoilers in the CTBT game. Drawing confidence from her military and economic power, India chose to call a spade a spade. Repeating his earlier assertion that the CTBT text is a "charade" the Indian Foreign Minister, in his July 9 interview with KHALEEJ TIMES, said: "The difficulty is that the CTBT is a draft created by the five nuclear states, not the whole world".

There are several countries which are not in agreement with it. We do not wish to sign where the nuclear five want us to sign because they do not want to listen to us. They do not want to reduce their weapons, those dangerous heaps that threaten the world. They are not willing to promise that one day there will be a world that's "free of nuclear weapons. Whatever India's intent on facts, India's positions cannot be challenged.

Unfortunately for Pakistan, whose position is equally valid, vacillation is in the air. Taking off on a high note of clarity and conviction, Pakistan maintains that the CTBT's feasibility for Pakistan essentially hinges on India's participation in the treaty. Islamabad never objected to other genuine problems with the text, including verification and on site inspection among others. Now, however,even Pakistan's clarity in our linkage with India' stance seems to be disappearing.

Last month, commenting on the CTBT, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ali had reportedly said: "We want genuine negotiations, not a dictatorship from the West". Throughout in Geneva, Pakistan continuously took the position that to make the CTBT regime effective, it must cover all countries including India.

Unless all eight nuclear capable states would not sign, Pakistan's delegate to the Disarmament Conference, Munir Akram, declared at the June 26 plenary session, "such a treaty will be a farce and will be dead at arrival". Interestingly, according to Press reports, the next day, President Farooq Leghari, responding to Press questions on Clinton's letter 'requesting' Pakistan's cooperation on the CTBT, did not take the standard Islamabad position that without India, Pakistan will not be a signatory. He, however, did say that "Pakistan never succumbed to pressure and neither would it. But we

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agree with the objectives of CTBT are looking for the exact shape of CTBT. We want that our concerns be satisfied".

Then on July 4 a Pakistan Foreign office spokesman reaffirmed Islamabad's Position of no CTBT for Pakistan unless India signs. Yet surprisingly on July 11 PTV quoted the Pakistan Foreign Minister saying: "We have assured the American Ambassadors that Pakistan will not block finalisation of the CTBT." He was referring to his meeting with US envoys to Delhi and Islamabad.

Significantly, in late June, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto received President Clinton's letter seeking Pakistani "cooperation" in the CTBT negotiations. It appears that Clinton's letter seeking Pakistan's cooperation in the CTBT has 'confused' Pakistani officials. Clinton's message must have been clear under American pressure, though Islamabad's clarity often blurs. Yet in the past, with leadership like that of Gulam Ishaq Khan, confident and clear-headed on military security matters, it has been different. In the early nineties, Washington's pressure to rollback on the nuclear programme and on Kashmir was resisted. In the last half decade Pakistan has effectively established its policy of linkage with the Indian position on issues of regional disarmament. Pakistan has had to stand firm on parity over nuclear non-proliferation and today, arm-twisting aside, all countries openly accept hat Pakistan cannot sign the NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty]. Pakistan's various regional disarmament proposals have added to its credibility as a state genuinely opting for regional disarmament.

Pakistan cannot afford to give up its linkage with India policy on the, CTBT. Given the military balance of power in the region and the state of Pakistan-India bilateral relations, Islamabad cannot give up on its force options. Unless bilateral ties improve, military force will remain a central requirement of Pakistan's diplomacy with India.

Signing the CTBT unilaterally will, undermine Pakistan's diplomatic and military standing vis-a-vis India. As for, American pressure, that it can he resisted without the skies failing on us has been amply demonstrated in the past. There can be no valid quid pro quo for Pakistan even if it signs. Pakistan can never turn to Washington for any guarantees within the regional context. If Clinton wants the CTBT feather in his cap for electioneering purposes, Pakistan should not oblige — it will be a highcost, no-yield barter.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Minister Views Escalating War Costs

BK1507115696 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 15 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Deputy Finance Minister Professor G.L. Peiris says that Sri Lanka's escalating war costs are likely to make the balancing of the budget more difficult and would keep interest rates volatile. This is the second successive year in which defense spending has overshot the budget as the armed forces continue their campaign against the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] in the North and the East. The minister told REUTERS in an interview that it is of paramount necessity to fight the war because political stability is the need of the hour. Sri Lanka budgeted 48 billion rupees for military expenditure in 1996 and at the end of the first six months there had been an overrun of approximately 10 billion rupees. Defense spending shot up to 34 billion rupees in 1995 from a budgeted 24 billion rupees. The minister noted that the overwhelming majority of people in the country want the Northeast conflict to be dealt with, but he said the war could not last for ever without adversely affecting the economy. Adding that the government had repeatedly said that ultimately the solution had to be a political initiative.

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